

A Dawson Photo Sc

Laokoon

from the original marble in the Vatican

SELECTED PROSE WORKS

OF

G. E. LESSING

Translated from the German

BY

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LAOKOON

HOW THE ANCIENTS REPRESENTED DEATH

DRAMATIC NOTES

LONDON:

GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,

COVENT GARDEN

1879.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS

PREFAC



THE translation of the 'Laokoon' in this volume is substantially that of Mr. E. C. Beasley, formerly of Wadham College, Oxford, published in 1853, the merits of which have been generally acknowledged. For this edition it has been subjected to a complete and careful revision with the object of making it as accurate and literal a representation of the original as possible. A synopsis of its contents, which it is hoped will be found useful in a careful study of the work, has also been prefixed.

The other contents of the volume are due to Miss Helen Zimmern (author of 'Arthur Schopenhauer; his Life and his Philosophy,' and 'G. E. Lessing, his Life and his Works'), who first suggested the publication of an English version of the 'Hamburgische Dramaturgie,' somewhat abridged by the omission of passages unlikely to interest readers of the present day, and who kindly undertook the by no means simple task of selection and translation. The essay on "How the ancients represented Death," which has a close connexion with a portion of the 'Laokoon,' is also translated by her.

CONTENTS.



INTRODUCTION.



Though there is no writer whose works may be more advantageously studied as a whole than Lessing's, there are few of equal importance who are known in this country in so partial and fragmentary a manner. Various translations of 'Nathan der Weise' and 'Minna von Barnhelm' have, it is true, exhibited him fairly enough as a dramatist of pure style, refined humour, and liberal thought; at the same time another class of readers has had more than one opportunity of studying the treatise on the 'Laokoon,' and admiring his vigorous and suggestive style of criticism and wide scholarship, which must always give it a literary interest whatever substantial value may be assigned to it. But such an acquaintance with isolated pieces hardly allows a reader to estimate their real value, and still less does it afford him an opportunity of co-ordinating the positions of Lessing the dramatist and Lessing the critic, and forming any definite notion of his true place in literary history. To do so demands in any case some general knowledge of German literature, but whilst Goethe and Schiller have become duly appreciated in this country, their great precursor has, amongst general readers, been little more than a name to those who were even so far acquainted with him. Two interesting biographical works by Mr. James Sime and Miss Helen

Zimmern have, no doubt, done much to dispel this ignorance, and paved the way for a wider study of Lessing's own work, and the publication in the series which comprises this volume, of a translation of all his completed dramas, has given English readers an opportunity of estimating his merits for themselves in this particular path of literature. But inasmuch as these dramas, a large proportion of which were composed in his youth, are very far from representing the substance of his more mature work, a selection, at least, from his prose writings, in which of course the 'Laokoon' must be included, is absolutely necessary to give any adequate notion of Lessing's achievements.

The main bent of his mind was essentially critical, and this fact is sufficient to account for the modified degree of recognition which he has met with. A critic merely as such cannot be a popular writer, and the necessity that the results of his labours, so far as they are effective, must be appropriated and absorbed by succeeding writers has a further tendency to limit the duration of any fame that he may have acquired on the score of them. That Lessing, notwithstanding this, is known as the author of some pieces that are in the truest sense popular is due to qualities not strictly critical, or necessarily coexistent with the clear insight and independence of mind which forced him to analyze afresh and probe to its depths any subject that came within his intellectual grasp. It is the faculty of invention to which are due such creations as Nathan, Minna, or von Tellheim, and the strong infusion of personal character which gives to his didactic writings the charm of essays, whilst they have the weight of treatises, that constitute his claims to popular appreciation

But whilst Lessing is thus preserved from classification in the unattractive if not unfruitful order of minds that are "nothing if not critical," it is no less a fact that his

animating motive in almost all he wrote was a distinctly critical purpose. Though we may not accept literally the modest estimate of his own powers which he has given at the close of the 'Hamburg Dramaturgy,' we are forced to admit that he regarded such a purpose as conducive to all good writing. "To act with a purpose," he says, "is what raises man above the brutes; to invent with a purpose, to imitate with a purpose, is that which distinguishes genius from the petty artists who only invent to invent, imitate to imitate."[1] This may appear at first sight difficult to reconcile with the dictum of a greater inventive genius if a less profound theorizer, with whom modern critics at any rate will be more disposed to agree. Goethe has said, "a good work of art may and will have moral results, but to require of the artist a moral aim is to spoil his work."[2] It is true that he here speaks of a distinctly ethical purpose, whilst Lessing's statement may be coloured by the particular occasion, the criticism of one of Marmontel's Tales applied to a dramatic purpose, which called it forth, and that it is modified by limitation to the chief characters of such a work; but the two propositions no less indicate a wide opposition in the points of view from which a work of art may be conceived of. Without entering further into the question, it is enough to say that Lessing approached all æsthetic subjects in an attitude of mind which, while thoroughly independent and natural, erred, if it did so at all, in the stringency of its requirements.

Such a frame of mind was well suited to the time in which he lived, if indeed it may not be said to have been produced by it. He found his country with a language excelling in force and individuality, but with no literature worthy of it—and adopting in default a foreign literature not only

[1] See p 327 [2] Dichtung und Wahrheit, ii. 112.

the fact that he had no technical acquaintance with the subject; he dealt only with its literature and history, a fact which must not be overlooked in considering his treatise on the 'Laokoon.' But on the other hand the field was a fresher one; no such master mind as Aristotle's had formulated the principles of the plastic arts, and the misconceptions to which he opposed his acute analysis were prevalent wherever the fine arts were held in any estimation.

These considerations ought to provide against the 'Laokoon's' being judged from too high a standpoint in art. It was confessedly a fragmentary composition; a second and a third portion were contemplated by Lessing. But even had he carried out his whole plan, it would as a detailed criticism have treated of only a segment of what we now comprehend in the term fine arts. That Lessing practically limits his definition of beauty to that of form, that he ignores the pleasing influence which may be exercised on the mind by colour, that he expressly depreciates the work of the landscape-painter, and that he takes insufficient cognizance of the powerful effect of religion upon art, might tell against his claims, if he had made any, *to be an expositor* of art, but they *ought not to* be urged in derogation of a treatise which professed to deal with plastic art from one point of view, namely in its correlation with descriptive poetry. These deficiencies may prove that he was no practical artist, that he had little or no knowledge of Italian painting, that in fact he unconsciously limited his observations to that aspect of art of which alone he was competent to speak—they do not invalidate his criticisms within the limits thus imposed. Fragmentary or imperfect as it may be considered as a treatise upon art, the 'Laokoon' is not the less a masterly example of the application of inductive reasoning to æsthetics. The important principle that it demon-

strates, the recognition of limits beyond which the artist and the poet cannot safely venture, is one that is applicable to any other field of art, and the great effect which the work always produces on first reading is perhaps due not only to the clearness with which it enforces this principle, but also to the wide application of which its reasoning appears to be susceptible.

It has been pointed out more than once that Lessing was in some measure indebted to other writers, particularly to the Abbé Dubos,[5] for some of the leading ideas in his work: but the largely increased value which such portions of the treatise have acquired by their incorporation in a developed æsthetic theory, has amply justified Lessing's appropriation of them. The real originality of the work as a whole is patent, and the profound interest excited by it in minds most qualified to form a just estimate of it is the strongest proof of its merits. A book which filled Goethe when a Leipsic student with enthusiasm, unreservedly endorsed in later life,—which Herder read three times through in a single afternoon and night, and from which Macaulay, as he told the late G. H. Lewes, learned more than he ever learned elsewhere, is one of which there is no room to question the intrinsic worth.

On the other hand it may be said that the very cogency of its reasoning, and the obviousness of the truths as enunciated by it, have placed it out of date, inasmuch as its principles, recognized at once, have become the common property of all later writers. As Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations' to the political economist, so is the 'Laokoon' said to be to the critic,—a work which did much in its day, but the modern value of which is chiefly historical and literary. This would be true enough were the function

[5] Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et la Peinture, 1719.

of criticism confined to those who were duly qualified for it, but in these days, when criticism has become a trade which every journalist feels called upon to practise, it is more than ever important that some of the fundamental principles which should guide it should be enforced. The fact that the leading idea of Lessing's treatise, the limitation and distinctiveness of the spheres of art and poetry, is continually ignored even in quarters where special qualifications are looked for, is sufficient reason for its reassertion.

That many passages in the treatise might, so far as educational purposes are concerned, be advantageously modified or enlarged upon, may be taken for granted, but such a process would involve also the omission of many of Lessing's notes which have a purely literary or antiquarian interest, and consequently obliterate some of its most characteristic features. But inasmuch as the first object of the present publication is to assist as far as may be in illustrating Lessing's literary character, a contrary plan has rather been adopted, and the translation, which is not a new one, has been revised, with the object of making it as accurate a representation of the original as possible. And of all his works the 'Laokoon' is perhaps the one best calculated to display the writer's character, so far as a single one can do it, in its various phases. Though professedly a critical essay on an abstract subject of speculation, it abounds in personal traits, characteristic phraseology, and happy illustration, displaying a mind singular in the extent and accuracy of its knowledge. Whilst not avowedly polemical, it exhibits frequent symptoms of that combative tendency which showed Lessing at his happiest when he was tearing to shreds the errors of some ill-starred offender against consistency or common sense; whether his adversary were dead or living made little difference, for Lessing's animus had

no infusion of malice or personal spite. "Wide in soul and bold of tongue" as he was, his simple object was the vindication of the cause of truth. His hatred of charlatanism and his uncompromising insistance on what he holds to be right may be less forcibly illustrated in the 'Laokoon' than it is for instance in some passages of the 'Hamburg Dramaturgy', but this moderation of tone rather adorns than obscures those features which have an especial attraction for us. For "it is to Lessing," says Carlyle, "that an Englishman would turn with readiest affection. . . . . As a poet, as a critic, philosopher, or controversialist, his style will be found precisely such as we of England are accustomed to admire most; brief, nervous, vivid; yet quiet, without glitter or antithesis; idiomatic, pure without purism, transparent, yet full of character and reflex hues of meaning."[6] It is to be recollected, too, that he was one of the earliest of continental writers to appreciate and assert the value of English literature, and that in endeavouring to purify that of his own country, he did much for the credit of ours.

Such intellectual fellowship is strengthened by the sympathy that the story of his hardly fought but uncomplaining life cannot fail to excite, and must surely entitle him to no less esteem from us than the vital services which he rendered to German literature have gained for him amongst his own countrymen.

Though Lessing's treatise has only a subsidiary connexion with the sculptured marble from which it is named, yet the interest which that fine work of ancient art has always excited cannot but be increased in the minds of all who appreciate the important critical purpose which it

[6] Essay on the State of German Literature.

has been made to serve. A few words on its history may therefore not be considered out of place.

The probable period of its execution remains as it was in Lessing's time, an open question. His own opinion and the æsthetic grounds upon which he assigns to it a comparatively late, that is a post-Virgilian, origin are cogently set forth in the treatise, and no conclusive circumstantial evidence has been brought forward in contradiction. All that is known for certain is that the group was executed by three Rhodian sculptors, whose names have been preserved by Pliny, that it once adorned the Baths of Titus at Rome, that in some barbarian capture of the city it was overthrown or purposely buried, and that it lay concealed until the year 1506, when it was once more brought to the light of day.

Its discovery proved a fortune to the lucky individual, one Felice di Fredi, in whose vineyard on the Esquiline it was disinterred, for he was rewarded by Pope Julius II. with half the customs levied at the Porta S. Giovanni, a revenue afterwards commuted by Leo X for a lucrative hereditary appointment. Even posthumous honours awaited this involuntary friend of art, for the history of the incident is set forth at length on his tombstone in the church of Ara Coeli, upon which he is said to "glory in death" in his fortunate discovery.

The frontispiece of this volume is a reproduction on copper of a photograph from the original marble, the extreme height of which is seven feet.[7] It is to be noted,

[7] The advantage of a photographic reproduction will be made evident by a careful scrutiny of the features of the figure of Laokoon, on the expression of which an important portion of Lessing's argument is based It may be remarked here, that an examination of this figure from an anatomical point of view has shown that the arrangement of the muscles fully bears out Winckelmann's observations as adopted by Lessing, and gives additional weight, if this were needed, to the conclusions of the latter.

however, that the group when first discovered was not precisely in the condition in which it now appears, inasmuch as some portions, including the right arm of the principal figure, and the folds of the serpent with which it is implicated, were wanting, and the original position of this arm has given rise to another question, not touched upon by Lessing, but scarcely less interesting than that of the date of the whole work To whom the modern arm is due is also a matter of uncertainty. Within twenty years of the discovery of the group Baccio Bandinelli made a copy of it in marble, having previously, according to Vasari, made for his own use a wax model of the deficient right arm The supposition adopted by Winckelmann, that Michelangelo began a restoration of the arm, is unsupported, and probably originated in a confusion between his name and that of Giovanangelo Montorsoli, who is definitely mentioned by Vasari as having restored the arm for Clement VII. Others say that Montorsoli did not complete it, and suppose that the arm now lying beneath the statue is his attempt. Winckelmann appears to ascribe the restoration to Bernini, and later artists, namely Cornacchini, and a French sculptor Girardon, are mentioned by other authorities. While it is possible that there have been successive restorations, it seems most probable that the present position of the arm is due to Bandinelli

But that this modern arm has been correctly placed, whomsoever by, admits of very grave doubt, inasmuch as its position may be considered to impair the balance of the group and to give an ungraceful outline to the whole composition This opinion is supported by a fact observed by Canova, namely, the existence of a projection on the head of the principal figure, indicating that some other part of the composition here came into contact with it. And only recently evidence of some value in favour of a

different position of the arm has been brought forward by Mr. C. W. King, of Trinity College, Cambridge. In the twenty-fourth volume of the *Archæological Journal* he published a drawing from a seal appended to an English legal document bearing the dáte 1529, that is, only twenty-three years after the discovery of the marble group. This seal was the impression of an intaglio gem set as a signet, and in the opinion of Mr. King, whose authority upon such matters is of the greatest weight, the gem must have been of ancient Greek and not of *cinque-cento* workmanship.

In this case it not only certifies to the original bent position of the arm, but affords conclusive evidence as to the Greek origin of the group itself in opposition to the opinion adopted by Lessing. It is to be observed, however, that Mr. King's opinion is founded, not upon an examination of the gem itself, which is not known to exist, but upon an impression in wax necessarily "dulled and wasted by time," and on this ground another antiquary, Mr. Smirke, ventures to doubt the certainty of the conclusions drawn. But even admitting that the gem was of mediæval Italian workmanship, the date at which it is found in use in England as a signet, viz. only twenty-three years after the discovery of the marble, allows of no doubt but that it was executed before the question of the restoration was in any way prejudged, so that under the least favourable circumstances it may, as the work of a skilful artist, be held to corroborate strongly the opinion of those who have in later times disapproved of the actual restoration. Mr. King's copy of the seal enlarged to double its actual size is with his permission given below. An accurate drawing of the whole group, published by Mr. Smirke (*Arch. Journal*, vol. xxv.), and drawn with careful reference to the indication of the gem, leaves no doubt as to the superiority of the suggested pose.

It diminishes, it is true, the "pyramidal culmination" (*pyramidalische Zuspitzung*) favourably noticed by Lessing (ch. v.), but still exhibits it in a form which obviously gains in grace by the modification.

E. B.



IMPRESSION OF INTAGLIO GEM
(*Enlarged.*)

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS

OF

THE LAOKOON.

CHAP. I.—ON THE EXPRESSION OF PAIN BY THE ARTIST AND POET.

Winckelmann on the Laokoon—His rule not universal—Expression of pain allowed in ancient poetry—Sophokles's Philoktetes—Homer—The greater self-command of the moderns—The heroism of northern Barbarians: that of the Greeks—Greeks and Trojans contrasted by Homer—Sophokles's lost Laokoon—Divergence of artist and poet

CHAP. II.—THE LAW OF BEAUTY.

The Greek artist limited himself to the imitation of beauty: with few exceptions—Greek legislation for art—The reciprocal influence of art and national characteristics—Beauty the highest law of ancient art—The expression of emotions modified—The Iphigeneia of Timanthes—Beauty preserved in the expression of the Laokoon, and in several ancient paintings specified.

CHAP. III.—SUBJECTS SUITABLE TO ART.

The wider limits of modern art—The choice of circumstance for a given subject—A critical moment to be avoided: because (1) its expression is complete; (2) though momentary, it is made to appear lasting—The Medea of Timomachus: compared with another Medea—The Ajax Furens of Timomachus.

CHAP. IV.—SUBJECTS SUITABLE TO POETRY.

The insignificance of physical beauty for the poet—The poet's conception not restricted to a point of time—The dramatic as well as the epic poet justified in his treatment of pain—The superiority of

Sophokles's Philoktetes over Chateaubrun's: (1) the physical nature of the pain; (2) the circumstance of solitude; (3) Adam Smith's strictures on the expression of pain—The falseness of general laws for the sensations—Cicero on the tragedians—The Roman arena prejudicial to tragedy; (4) other objections obviated in Sophokles's Philoktetes—The conflicting sentiments shown in the character of Neoptolemus, and their effect on the spectator—The similar conception in the Trachineæ—Tragic actors.

CHAP. V.—THE POET AND THE SCULPTOR

Whether Virgil or the Greek sculptor was the original inventor of the Laokoon group, or whether both had a common model—Various arguments in favour of Virgil—The Greek poets differ from Virgil and the sculptor—Comparison between Virgil and the sculptor: (1) the grouping; (2) the position of the limbs, (3) the coils of the serpents, (4) the question of drapery.

CHAP. VI.—THE PROBABILITY OF VIRGIL'S PRIORITY.

Imitation on the part of the sculptors not disparaging—The improbability of the contrary hypothesis, in respect to the arrangement of the group: in respect to Laokoon's cry of pain, Richardson's remarks thereon; in respect to the convolutions of the snakes—Sadolet's description—The needlessness of Virgil's deviations, if he had seen the group.

CHAP. VII.—POETRY AND ART RECIPROCALLY ILLUSTRATIVE.

Two modes of imitation. (1) by adopting a subject; (2) by adopting the manner of treating a common subject—The former not necessarily disparaging to the imitator—The poet and the artist can thus illustrate each other—Spence's 'Polymetis'—Examples of such illustration therein — False illustration applied by Spence and Addison.

CHAP. VIII.—THE GODS IN POETRY AND ART

Spence's assumption of the similarity of poetry and painting—The error shown in respect to representations of Bacchus, Minerva, Juno, and Venus—On representations of the gods generally: Venus especially.

CHAP. IX.—THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON ANCIENT ART.

The artist's work sometimes influenced by religious requirements, *e.g.* in the case of Bacchus—Symbolic statues should not be reckoned as works of art—The influence of religion sometimes overrated, as by Spence—Example, Vesta.

CHAP. X.—SYMBOLISM IN ART.

The Muses—Urania—Personifications of the moral attributes—Emblems necessary to the artist, but not to the poet—Some emblems are, however, poetical.

CHAP. XI.—ON ARTISTIC INVENTION.

Caylus confuses the two kinds of imitation (*v.* ch. vii.)—The relative value of conception and expression are reversed in the cases of poet and artist—The artist's indifference to originality of invention—The advantage of a familiar subject—Anecdote of Aristotle and Protogenes.

CHAP. XII.—ON THE REPRESENTATION OF INVISIBLE BEINGS.

Caylus ignores the distinction between visible and invisible beings in the Iliad, and hence other characteristics of the gods—Example, the fight of the gods in Iliad xxi.—Their stature and strength—The conventional method of denoting invisibility. inconsistent with Homer's meaning, and often in opposition to his spirit.

CHAP. XIII.—CAYLUS'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF HOMER.

Illustrations tested by the text; *e.g.* (1) the pestilence (Iliad i. 44); (2) the gods in council (Iliad iv. 1)—Poetical pictures, and artists' designs not convertible.

CHAP. XIV.—THE PICTURESQUE IN POETRY.

A poem not unpicturesque because it does not furnish subjects for design—*e.g.* Milton's 'Paradise Lost.'

CHAP. XV.—PICTURES WHICH BELONG TO POETRY ALONE.

The poet represents scenes which the artist cannot represent—Homer's Pandarus shooting—Its unfitness for the artist.

CHAP. XXII.—ART INSTRUCTED BY HOMER.

The Helen of Zeuxis—Caylus on the same subject—Other subjects painted by the ancients from Homer—Pheidias indebted to Homer—Hogarth on the Apollo Belvedere—Homer conscious of the effect of varied proportion.

CHAP. XXIII.—DEFORMITY OF BODY AND MIND IN POETRY.

Ugliness in poetry: Thersites—The ridiculous—The horrible: Achilles and Thersites, Edmund in King Lear; Richard III.

CHAP XXIV.—DEFORMITY OF BODY, OR UGLINESS, IN ART.

Unpleasant impressions to be avoided by the painter: such as that caused by ugliness—The impression is not compensated for by the incidental pleasure derived from the power of the artist or otherwise —Aristotle—Ugliness cannot be used with the same freedom as in poetry to enhance the ridiculous or the horrible.

CHAP. XXV.—DISGUST AND ITS CAUSES.

Disgust cannot be compensated for like other sentiments of aversion (Klotz)—Ugliness of form excites disgust in a modified degree—In poetry the disgusting can be used to enhance the ridiculous. *e g.* the Hottentot story in 'The Connoisseur', also the terrible, as in Hesiod's 'Sorrow,' Philoktetes, Hektor's dead body—Its special application to descriptions of hunger. *e g* Ovid's *Fames*, the Harpies, Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Sea Voyage'—In painting, the disgusting is still more to be avoided than ugliness.

CHAP XXVI—WINCKELMANN'S HISTORY OF ANCIENT ART.

The date of the Laokoon therein assigned to the age of Alexander the Great—Pliny's testimony as to the sculptors and their date examined—Assigned by Lessing to an early period of the Roman Empire.

CHAP. XXVII.—THE SAME.

Athanodorus of Rhodes—Winckelmann's interpretation of a passage of Pliny relating to the signatures on works of art—Strictures thereupon

LAOKOON

OR

ON THE LIMITS OF PAINTING AND POETRY.

Ὕλῃ καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως διαφέρουσι·
Πλουτ. πότ. Ἀθ. κατὰ Π. ἢ κατὰ Σ. ἐνδ.

WITH COLLATERAL ELUCIDATIONS OF VARIOUS QUESTIONS IN THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ART.

The greater part of Laokoon was written during Lessing's residence at Breslau, 1760–65. He completed and published it at Berlin in 1766 in the hope of furthering his candidature for the post of Royal Librarian, which however it failed to secure for him. This translation is based on that by Mr. E. C. Beasley, published in 1853.

PREFACE TO LAOKOON.

The first person who compared painting and poetry with one another was a man of refined feeling, who became aware of a similar effect produced upon himself by both arts. He felt that both represent what is absent as if it were present, and appearance as if it were reality; that both deceive, and that the deception of both is pleasing.

A second observer sought to penetrate below the surface of this pleasure, and discovered that in both it flowed from the same source. Beauty, the idea of which we first deduce from bodily objects, possesses universal laws, applicable to more things than one; to actions and to thoughts as well as to forms.

A third reflected upon the value and distribution of these universal laws, and noticed that some are more predominant in painting, others in poetry; that thus, in the latter case, poetry will help to explain and illustrate painting; in the former, painting will do the same for poetry.

The first was the amateur, the second the philosopher, the third the critic.

The two first could not easily make a wrong use of either their feelings or conclusions. On the other hand, the value of the critic's observations mainly depends upon the correctness of their application to the individual case; and since for one clear-sighted critic there have always been fifty ingenious ones, it would have been a wonder if this application had always been applied with all that

caution which is required to hold the balance equally between the two arts

If Apelles and Protogenes, in their lost writings on painting, affirmed and illustrated its laws by the previously established rules of poetry, we may feel sure that they did it with that moderation and accuracy with which we now see, in the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Horace, and Quintilian, the principles and experience of painting applied to eloquence and poetry. It is the privilege of the ancients never in any matter to do too much or too little

But in many points we moderns have imagined that we have advanced far beyond them, because we have changed their narrow lanes into highways, even though the shorter and safer highways contract into footpaths as they lead through deserts

The dazzling antithesis of the Greek Voltaire, "Painting is dumb poetry, and poetry speaking painting," can never have been found in any didactic work, it was an idea, amongst others, of Simonides, and the truth it contains is so evident that we feel compelled to overlook the indistinctness and error which accompany it

And yet the ancients did not overlook them They confined the expression of Simonides to the effect of either art, but at the same time forgot not to inculcate that, notwithstanding the complete similarity of this effect, the two were different, both in the objects which they imitated and in their mode of imitation (ὕλῃ καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως)

But, just as though no such difference existed, many recent critics have drawn from this harmony of poetry and painting the most ill-digested conclusions At one time they compress poetry into the narrower limits of painting, at another they allow painting to occupy the whole wide sphere of poetry Everything, say they, that the one is entitled to should be conceded to the other, everything that pleases or displeases in the one is necessarily pleasing or displeasing in the other. Full

of this idea, they give utterance in the most confident tone to the most shallow decisions, when, criticizing the works of a poet and painter upon the same subject, they set down as faults any divergences they may observe, laying the blame upon the one or other accordingly as they may have more taste for poetry or for painting.

Indeed, this false criticism has misled in some degree the professors of art. It has produced the love of description in poetry, and of allegory in painting: while the critics strove to reduce poetry to a speaking painting, without properly knowing what it could and ought to paint; and painting to a dumb poem, without having considered in what degree it could express general ideas, without alienating itself from its destiny, and degenerating into an arbitrary method of writing.

The counteraction of this false taste and these groundless judgments is the principal aim of the following essay.

It originated casually, and has grown up rather in consequence of my reading than through the systematic development of general principles. It is accordingly rather to be regarded as unarranged collectanea for a book than as a book itself.

Still I flatter myself that even as such it will not be altogether deserving of contempt. We Germans have in general no want of systematic books. At deducing everything we wish, in the most beautiful order, from a few adopted explanations of words, we are the most complete adepts of any nation in the world.

Baumgarten acknowledged that he was indebted to Gesner's Dictionary for a great part of the examples in his work on Æsthetic. If my reasoning is not so cogent as Baumgarten's, my illustrations will at least taste more freshly of the well-spring.

Since I have, as it were, set out from the Laokoon, and several times return to it, I have wished to give it a share also in the title. Other short digressions on different

points in the history of ancient art contribute less to my end, and only stand where they do because I can never hope to find a more suitable place for them.

Calling to mind, as I do, that under the term Painting I comprehend the plastic arts generally, I give no pledge that under the name of Poetry I may not take a glance at those other arts in which the method of imitation is progressive.

LAOKOON.

CHAPTER I.

Herr Winckelmann has pronounced a noble simplicity and quiet grandeur, displayed in the posture no less than in the expression, to be the characteristic features common to all the Greek masterpieces of Painting and Sculpture. "As," says he,[1] "the depths of the sea always remain calm, however much the surface may be raging, so the expression in the figures of the Greeks, under every form of passion, shows a great and self-collected soul.

"This spirit is portrayed in the countenance of Laokoon, and not in the countenance alone, under the most violent suffering, the pain discovers itself in every muscle and sinew of his body, and the beholder, whilst looking at the agonized contraction of the abdomen, without viewing the face and the other parts, believes that he almost feels the pain himself. This pain expresses itself, however, without any violence, both in the features and in the whole posture. He raises no terrible shriek, such as Virgil makes his Laokoon utter, for the opening of the mouth does not admit it; it is rather an anxious and suppressed sigh, as described by Sadoleto. The pain of body and grandeur of soul are, as it were, weighed out, and distributed with equal strength, through the whole frame of the figure. Laokoon suffers, but he suffers as the Philoktetes of Sophokles, his misery pierces us to the very soul, but inspires us with a wish that we could endure misery like that great man.

"The expressing of so great a soul is far higher than

[1] On the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture, pp. 21, 22.

the painting of beautiful nature. The artist must have felt within himself that strength of spirit which he imprinted upon his marble Greece had philosophers and artists in one person, and more than one Metrodorus.[2] Philosophy gave her hand to art, and breathed into its figures more than ordinary souls"

The observation on which the foregoing remarks are founded, "that the pain in the face of Laokoon does not show itself with that force which its intensity would have led us to expect," is perfectly correct Moreover, it is indisputable that it is in this very point where the half-connoisseur would have decided that the artist had fallen short of Nature, and had not reached the true pathos of pain, that his wisdom is particularly conspicuous

But I confess I differ from Winckelmann as to what is in his opinion the basis of this wisdom, and as to the universality of the rule which he deduces from it.

I acknowledge that I was startled, first by the glance of disapproval which he casts upon Virgil, and secondly by the comparison with Philoktetes. From this point then I shall set out, and write down my thoughts as they were developed in me

"Laokoon suffers as Sophokles' Philoktetes." But how does the latter suffer? It is curious that his sufferings should leave such a different impression behind them. The cries, the shrieking, the wild imprecations, with which he filled the camp, and interrupted all the sacrifices and holy rites, resound no less horribly through his desert island, and were the cause of his being banished to it The same sounds of despondency, sorrow, and despair fill the theatre in the poet's imitation It has been observed that the third act of this piece is shorter than the others. from this it may be gathered, say the critics,[3] that the ancients took little pains to preserve a uniformity of length in the different acts I quite agree with them, but I should rather ground my opinion upon another example than this The sorrowful exclamations, the moanings, the interrupted ἆ, ἆ! φεῦ! ἀτταταῖ! ὤ μοι μοι! the whole lines full of πάπα πάπα! of which this act con-

[2] Plinius, xxxv 40.

[3] Brumoy, Theâtre des Grecs, t ii p 89.

sists, must have been pronounced with tensions and breakings off altogether different from those required in a continuous speech, and doubtless made this act last quite as long in the representation as the others. It appears much shorter to the reader, when seen on paper, than it must have done to the audience in a theatre.

A cry is the natural expression of bodily pain. Homer's wounded heroes frequently fall with cries to the ground. He makes Venus, when merely scratched, shriek aloud;[4] not that he may thereby paint the effeminacy of the goddess of pleasure, but rather that he may give suffering Nature her due; for even the iron Mars, when he feels the lance of Diomedes shrieks so horribly that his cries are like those of ten thousand furious warriors, and fill both armies with horror.[5] Though Homer, in other respects, raises his heroes above human nature, they always remain faithful to it in matters connected with the feeling of pain and insult, or its expression through cries, tears, or reproaches. In their actions they are beings of a higher order, in their feelings true men.

I know that we more refined Europeans, of a wiser and later age, know how to keep our mouths and eyes under closer restraint We are forbidden by courtesy and propriety to cry and weep; and with us the active bravery of the first rough age of the world has been changed into a passive. Yet even our own ancestors, though barbarians, were greater in the latter than in the former. To suppress all pain, to meet the stroke of death with unflinching eye, to die laughing under the bites of adders, to lament neither their sins nor the loss of their dearest friends · these were the characteristics of the old heroic courage of the north.[6] Palnatoki forbade his Jomsburgers either to fear or so much as to mention the name of fear.

Not so the Greek. He felt and feared. He gave utterance to his pain and sorrow. He was ashamed of no human weaknesses; only none of them must hold him

[4] Iliad, v. 343, 'Η δὲ μέγα ἰάχουσα—. [5] Iliad, v 859

[6] Th Bartholinus, de causis contemptæ a Danis adhuc gentilibus, cap I. [For Palnatoki, the famous sea-rover of the 10th century, v. Mallet's Northern Antiq (Bohn ed p 139)—ED.]

back from the path of honour, or impede him in the fulfilment of his duty. What in the barbarian sprang from habit and ferocity arose from principle in the Greek. With him heroism was as the spark concealed in flint, which, so long as no external force awakens it, sleeps in quiet, nor robs the stone either of its clearness or its coldness. With the barbarian it was a bright consuming flame, which was ever roaring, and devoured, or at least blackened, every other good quality. Thus when Homer makes the Trojans march to the combat with wild cries, the Greeks, on the contrary, in resolute silence, the critics justly observe that the poet intended to depict the one as barbarians, the other as a civilized people. I wonder that they have not remarked a similar contrast of character in another passage.[7] The hostile armies have made a truce; they are busied with burning their dead; and these rites are accompanied on both sides with the warm flow of tears (δάκρυα θέρμα χέοντες). But Priam forbids the Trojans to weep (οὐδ' εἴα κλαίειν Πρίαμος μέγας). He forbade them to weep, says Dacier, because he feared the effect would be too softening, and that on the morrow they would go with less courage to the battle. True! But why, I ask, should Priam *only* fear this result? Why does not Agamemnon also lay the same prohibition on the Greeks? The poet has a deeper meaning; he wishes to teach us that the civilized Greek could be brave at the same time that he wept, while in the uncivilized Trojan all human feelings were to be previously stifled. Νεμέσσωμαί γε μεν οὐδὲν κλαίειν, is the remark which, elsewhere,[8] Homer puts in the mouth of the intelligent son of Nestor.

It is worth observing that among the few tragedies which have come down to us from antiquity, two are found in which bodily pain constitutes not the lightest part of the misfortune which befalls the suffering heroes—the Philoktetes and the dying Hercules. Sophokles paints the last also, as moaning and shrieking, weeping and crying. Thanks to our polite neighbours, those masters of propriety, no such ridiculous and intolerable

[7] Iliad, vii. 421. [8] Odyss. iv. 195.

characters as a moaning Philoktetes or a shrieking Hercules will ever again appear upon the stage. One of their latest poets[9] has indeed ventured upon a Philoktetes, but would he have dared to exhibit the true one?

Even a Laokoon is found among the lost plays of Sophokles. Would that Fate had spared it to us! The slight mention which some old grammarians have made of it affords us no ground for concluding how the poet had handled his subject; but of this I feel certain, that Laokoon would not have been drawn more stoically than Philoktetes and Hercules. All stoicism is undramatical; and our sympathy is always proportioned to the suffering expressed by the object which interests us It is true, if we see him bear his misery with a great soul, this grandeur of soul excites our admiration; but admiration is only a cold emotion, and its inactive astonishment excludes every warmer passion as well as every distinct idea.

I now come to my inference; if it be true that a cry at the sensation of bodily pain, particularly according to the old Greek way of thinking, is quite compatible with greatness of soul, it cannot have been for the sake of expressing such greatness that the artist avoided imitating this shriek in marble. Another reason therefore must be found for his here deviating from his rival, the poet, who expresses it with the highest purpose.



CHAPTER II.

BE it fable or history that Love made the first essay in the plastic arts, it is certain that it never wearied of guiding the hands of the great masters of old. Painting, as now carried out in its whole compass, may be defined generally as the art of imitating figures on a flat surface; but the wise Greek allotted it far narrower limits, and confined it to the imitation of beautiful figures only; his artist painted nothing but the beautiful. Even the commonly beautiful, the beautiful of a lower order, was

[9] Chateaubrun.

only his accidental subject, his exercise, his relaxation. It was the perfection of the object itself that was to make his work exquisite, and he was too great to ask beholders to be satisfied with the mere cold pleasure which arises from a striking resemblance, or the consideration of his ability. In his art nothing was dearer, nothing seemed nobler to him than its proper end.

"Who would paint you when nobody will look at you?" asks an old epigrammatist[1] of an exceedingly deformed man. Many modern artists would say, "However misshapen you are, I will paint you; and although no one could look at you with pleasure, they will look with pleasure at my picture, not because it is your likeness, but because it will be an evidence of my skill in knowing how to delineate such a horror so faithfully."

It is true the propensity to this wanton boasting, united to fair abilities, not ennobled by exalted subjects, is too natural for even the Greeks not to have had their Pauson and their Pyricus. They had them, but they rendered them strict justice. Pauson, who kept below the beautiful of common nature, whose low taste loved to portray all that is faulty and ugly in the human form,[2]

[1] Antiochus (Antholog. lib. ii. cap. 4). Hardouin, in his commentary on Pliny (lib. xxxv. sect. 36), attributes this epigram to a certain Piso; but no such name is to be found in the catalogue of Greek epigrammatists.

[2] It is for this reason that Aristotle forbids his pictures to be shown to young people, viz. that their imaginations may be preserved from any acquaintance with ugly forms (Polit. lib. viii., cap. 5). Boden proposes to read Pausanias, instead of Pauson, in this passage, because he is well known to have painted licentious pictures (De umbra poetica, Comment. i. 13), as though a philosophical lawgiver were required to teach us that such voluptuous allurements were to be kept out of the reach of young people. Had he but referred to the well-known passage in the Poetics (cap. ii.), he would never have put forward his hypothesis. Some commentators (e.g. Kuhn on Ælian. Var. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 3) maintain that the distinction which Aristotle there draws between Polygnotus, Dionysius, and Pauson consisted in Polygnotus having painted gods and heroes, while Dionysius painted men, and Pauson beasts. They all, however, painted the human figure; and Pauson's once having painted a horse does not prove that he was an animal painter, as Boden supposes him to have been. Their rank was decided by the degrees of beauty with which they endowed their human forms. Dionysius could paint nothing but men, and was called, *par excellence*, as

lived in the most contemptible poverty.[3] And Pyricus, who painted barbers' rooms, dirty workshops, apes, and kitchen herbs, with all the industry of a Dutch artist (as though things of that kind possessed such charm in nature, or could so rarely be seen), acquired the surname of Rhyparographer,[4] or "Dirt-Painter!" although the luxurious rich man paid for his works with their weight in gold, as if to assist their intrinsic worthlessness by this imaginary value.

The state itself did not deem it beneath its dignity to confine the artist within his proper sphere by an exercise of its power. The law of the Thebans recommending him to use imitation as a means of arriving at ideal beauty; and prohibiting, on pain of punishment, its use for the attainment of ideal ugliness, is well known. This was no law against bunglers, as most writers, and among them even Junius,[5] have supposed. It was in condemnation of the Greek *ghezzi*, of that unworthy device which enables an artist to obtain a likeness by the exaggeration of the uglier parts of his original, *i.e* by caricature.

From the self-same spirit of the beautiful sprang the following regulation of the Olympic judges (ἑλλανοδίχαι). Every winner obtained a statue, but only to him who had been thrice a conqueror was a portrait statue (ἄγαλμα εἰκονικόν) erected.[6] Too many indifferent portraits were not allowed to find a place among the productions of art; for although a portrait admits of the ideal, this last must be subordinate to the likeness; it is the ideal of an individual man, and not the ideal of man in the abstract.

We laugh when we hear that among the ancients even the arts were subjected to municipal laws, but we are not always in the right when we laugh. Unquestionably law must not assume the power of laying any constraint on knowledge; for the aim of knowledge is truth; truth is

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it were, the "Anthropographus," or "Man-painter," because he copied nature too slavishly, and was unable to rise to that ideal below which it would have been sacrilege to have painted gods and heroes

[3] Aristophanes Plut. 602, Acharnenses, 854.

[4] Plinius, xxxv. 37 [But note the better readings *Rhopographus* (painter of *vulgar* subjects) and *Piræicus* for Pyricus —ED]

[5] De Pictura vet lib II. cap iv.

[6] Plinius, xxxiv. 9

necessary to the soul, and it becomes tyranny to do it the smallest violence in the gratification of this essential need. The aim of art, on the contrary, is pleasure, which is not indispensable; and it may therefore depend upon the lawgiver to decide what kind of pleasure, and what degree of every kind, he would allow.

The plastic arts especially, besides the infallible influence which they exercise upon the national character, are capable of an effect which demands the closest inspection of the law. As beautiful men produced beautiful statues, so the latter reacted upon the former, and the state became indebted to beautiful statues for beautiful men. But with us the tender imaginative power of the mother is supposed to show itself only in the production of monsters.

In this point of view I think I can detect some truth in certain stories, which are generally rejected as pure inventions. The mothers of Aristodemus, Alexander the Great, Scipio, Augustus, and Galerius, all dreamed, during their pregnancy, that they had intercourse with a serpent. The serpent was a token of divinity,[7] and the beautiful statues and paintings of Bacchus, Apollo, Mercury, or Hercules were seldom without one. These honourable wives had by day feasted their eyes upon the god, and the confusing dream recalled the reptile's form. Thus I at the same time maintain the dream and dispose of the interpretation, which the pride of their sons and the shamelessness of the flatterer put upon it: for there must have been a reason why the adulterous phantasy should always have been a serpent.

But I am digressing; all I want to establish is, that among the ancients beauty was the highest law of the plastic arts. And this, once proved, it is a necessary consequence that everything else over which their range could be at the same time extended, if incompatible with beauty, gave way entirely to it; if compatible, was at

[7] It is an error to suppose that the serpent was exclusively the symbol of a healing deity. Justin Martyr (Apolog. ii. p. 55, Edit. Sylburgh) says expressly: παρὰ παντὶ τῶν νομιζομένων παρ' ὑμῖν θεῶν, ὄφις σύμβολον μέγα καὶ μυστήριον ἀναγράφεται: and it would be easy to quote a whole series of monuments where the serpent accompanies deities who had no connexion whatever with the healing art.

least subordinate. I will abide by my expression. There are passions, and degrees of passion, which are expressed by the ugliest possible contortions of countenance, and throw the whole body into such a forced position that all the beautiful lines which cover its surface in a quiet attitude are lost. From all such emotions the ancient masters either abstained entirely, or reduced them to that lower degree in which they are capable of a certain measure of beauty.

Rage and despair disgraced none of their productions; I dare maintain that they have never painted a Fury.[8]

[8] Though we were to review all the works of art mentioned by Pliny, Pausanias, and others, or search among the ancient statues, bas-reliefs, and paintings still extant, we should nowhere find a fury. I except such figures as belong to the language of symbols, rather than to art, and are principally to be found upon coins Meantime Spence, since he was determined to discover furies, would do much better to borrow them from the coins (Seguini Numis p 178. Spanhem de Præst Numism. Dissert xiii. p 639. Les Césars de Julien, par Spanheim, p 48) than he has done in introducing them by an ingenious idea into a work in which there is certainly no trace of them. He says in his Polymetis (Dial. xvi. p 272): "Though furies are very uncommon in the works of the ancient artists, yet there is one story in which they are generally introduced by them I mean the death of Meleager; in the relievos of which they are often represented as encouraging or urging Althæa to burn the fatal brand on which the life of her only son depended. Even a woman's resentment, you see, could not go so far without a little help of the devil. In a copy of one of these relievos, published by Bellori in the Admiranda, there are two women standing by the altar with Althæa, who are probably meant for furies in the original (for who but furies would assist at such a sacrifice?) That they are scarce horrid enough for that character is doubtless the fault of the copy, but what is most to be observed in that piece is a round medallion below, about the midst of it, with the evident head of a fury upon it This might be what Althæa addressed her prayers to whenever she was going to do any very evil action, and on this occasion in particular had every reason, therefore," &c By such tortuous logic as this anything might be proved. Who else but the furies, asks Spence, would have been present at such an action? I answer, the maid-servants of Althæa, who had to light and keep up the fire. Ovid says (Metamorph viii 460).—

"Protulit hunc (stipitem) genetrix, tædasque in fragmina poni
Imperat, et positis inimicos admovet ignes."

Both persons, in fact, have in their hands such "tædas" or long pieces of resinous fir as the ancients used for torches, and one of them has just broken one of these pieces of fir, as her attitude proves I am just

Indignation was softened down to seriousness. In poetry it was the indignant Jupiter who hurled the lightning, in art it was only the serious. Grief was lessened into mournfulness; and where this softening could find no place, where mere grief would have been as lowering as disfiguring, what did Timanthes? His painting of the sacrifice of Iphigenia is known, in which he has imparted to all the bystanders that peculiar degree of sorrow which becomes them, but has concealed the face of the father, which should have shown the most profound of all. On this many clever criticisms have been passed. He had, says one,[9] so exhausted his powers in the sorrowful faces of the bystanders that he despaired of being able to give a more sorrowful one to the father. By so doing he confessed, says another, that the pain of a father under such circumstances is beyond all expression.[10] For my part, I see no incapacity of either artist or art in it. With the degree of passion the corresponding lines of countenance

as far from recognizing a fury on the disc near the middle of the work. It is a face which expresses violent pain, and without doubt is meant to be the head of Meleager himself (Metamorph. viii. 515.)

"Inscius atque absens flamma Meleagros in illa
Uritur; et cæcis torreri viscera sentit
Ignibus: et magnos superat virtute dolores."

The artist used it as a means of transition into the subsequent scene of the same story, which directly after exhibits Meleager as dying. The figures which Spence considers furies, Montfaucon takes to be Parcæ (Antiq. Exp. vol. i. p. 162), except the head upon the disc, which he also decides to be a fury. Even Bellori (Admiranda, tab. 77) leaves it undecided whether they are parcæ or furies—an "or," which is sufficient evidence that they are neither the one nor the other. The rest of Montfaucon's explanation is also deficient in accuracy. The female figure who is leaning upon her elbows against the bed should have been called Kassandra, and not Atalanta. Atalanta is the one who is sitting in a mournful attitude with her back turned towards the bed. The artist has shown great intelligence in separating her from the family, inasmuch as she was only the mistress and not the wife of Meleager, and her sorrow therefore at a misfortune of which she had been the innocent cause could only have exasperated his relations.

[9] Plinius, xxxv. 35: "Cum mœstos pinxisset omnes, præcipue patruum, et tristitiæ omnem imaginem consumpsisset, patris ipsius vultum velavit, quem digne non poterat ostendere."

[10] "Summi mœroris acerbitatem arte exprimi non posse confessus est." —Valerius Maximus, viii. 11.

are also strengthened; in the highest degree they are most decided, and nothing in art is easier than their expression. But Timanthes knew the limits within which the Graces had confined his art. He knew that the grief which became Agamemnon, as a father, must have been expressed by contortions, at all times ugly; but so far as dignity and beauty could be combined with the expression of such a feeling, so far he pushed it. True, he would fain have passed over the ugly, fain have softened it; but since his piece did not admit either of its omission or diminution, what was left him but its concealment? He left to conjecture what he might not paint. In short, this concealment is a sacrifice which the artist made to beauty, and is an instance, not how expression may exceed the capacity of art, but how it should be subjected to art's first law, the law of beauty.

And now, if we apply this to the Laokoon, the principle for which I am searching is clear. The master aimed at the highest beauty compatible with the adopted circumstances of bodily pain The latter, in all its disfiguring violence, could not be combined with the former, therefore he must reduce it; he must soften shrieks into sighs, not because a shriek would have betrayed an ignoble soul, but because it would have produced a hideous contortion of the countenance. For only imagine the mouth of Laokoon to be forced open, and then judge! Let him shriek, and look at him! It *was* a form which inspired compassion, for it displayed beauty and pain at once. It has become an ugly and horrible shape from which we gladly avert our eyes; for the sight of pain excites annoyance, unless the beauty of the suffering object change that annoyance into the sweet emotion of pity.

The mere wide opening of the mouth, setting aside the forced and disagreeable manner in which the other parts of the face are displaced and distorted by it, is in painting a spot, and in sculpture a cavity; both which produce the worst possible effect Montfaucon displayed little taste when he pronounced an old bearded head with a gaping mouth to be a bust of Jupiter, uttering oracles.[11] Is a god

[11] *Antiquit. Expl. vol. i p 50.*

obliged to shout when he divulges the future? Would a pleasing outline of the mouth have cast suspicion on his utterance? Neither do I believe Valerius when he says, merely from memory, that in that picture of Timanthes, Ajax was represented as shrieking[12] Even far worse masters, in a period when art was already degenerate, did not think of allowing the wildest barbarians, when filled with affright, and the terrors of death beneath the victor's sword, to open their mouths and shriek[13]

It is certain that this softening down of extreme bodily pain to a lower degree of feeling is perceptible in several productions of ancient art The suffering Hercules in the poisoned garment, the work of an unknown old master, was not the Hercules of Sophokles, whose shrieks are so horrible that the rocks of Lokris and headlands of Euboia resound therewith. He was gloomy rather than wild.[14] The Philoktetes of Pythagoras Leontinus appeared to impart his pain to the beholder, yet this effect would have been destroyed by the least ugliness of feature. I may be asked how I know that this master executed a statue of Philoktetes? From a passage in Pliny, so manifestly either interpolated or mutilated that it ought not to have awaited my amendment.[15]

[12] He thus specifies the degrees of sorrow actually expressed by Timanthes "Calchantem tristem, mæstum Ulyssem, clamantem Ajacem, lamentantem Menelaum." The shrieking Ajax could not but have been an ugly figure, and since neither Cicero nor Quintilian mention it in their descriptions of this painting, I am the more inclined to believe it an addition by which Valerius thought to enrich the picture from his own imagination

[13] Bellorii Admiranda, tab 11, 12 [14] Plinius, xxxiv. 19, 36.

[15] "Eundem" (namely Myro), we read in Pliny (lib. xxxiv. sec 19, 4[illegible]), "vicit et (Pythagoras) Leontinus, qui fecit stadiodromon Astylon [illegible] Olympiæ ostenditur et Libyn puerum tenentem tabulam, eodem [illegible], et mala ferentem nudum Syracusis autem claudicantem, [illegible] ulceris dolorem sentire etiam spectantes videntur." Let us consider the last sentence a little more closely Manifestly some one is spoken of who is known by all on account of a painful ulcer "Cujus ulceris," &c., and is this "cujus" to refer to the mere "claudicantem," and the "claudicantem" possibly agree with a "puerum," supplied from the foregoing clause? No one has more right to be celebrated on account of such an ulcer than Philoktetes. I therefore read "Philoctetem" instead of "claudicantem," or at least consider that the former of the two words has slipped out of the manuscripts, owing to its resemblance in sound to the latter; and that the proper reading would be "Philoc-

CHAPTER III.

But, as has been already mentioned, art has in modern times been allotted a far wider sphere. "Its imitations, it is said, extend over the whole of visible nature, of which the beautiful is but a small part: truth and expression is its first law; and as nature herself is ever ready to sacrifice beauty to higher aims, so likewise the artist must render it subordinate to his general design, and not pursue it farther than truth and expression permit. Enough that, through these two, what is most ugly in nature has been changed into a beauty of art."

But even if we should leave this idea, whatever its value, for the present undisputed, would there not arise other considerations independent of it, which would compel the artist to put certain limits to expression, and prevent him from ever drawing it at its highest intensity?

I believe the fact, that it is to a single moment that the material limits of art confine all its imitations, will lead us to similar views.

If the artist, out of ever-varying nature, can only make use of a single moment, and the painter especially can only use this moment from one point of view, whilst their works are intended to stand the test not only of a passing glance, but of long and repeated contemplation, it is clear that this moment, and the point from which this moment is viewed, cannot be chosen with too great a regard to results. Now that only is a happy choice which allows the imagination free scope. The longer we gaze, the more must our imagination add; and the more our imagination adds, the more we must believe we see. In the whole course of an emotion there is no moment which possesses this advantage so little as its highest stage. There is nothing beyond this; and the presentation of extremes to the eye clips the wings of fancy,

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tetem claudicantem." Sophokles speaks of his στίβον κατ' ἀνάγκαν ἕρπειν: and he must have limped, since he could not set his diseased foot firmly to the ground.

prevents her from soaring beyond the impression of the senses, and compels her to occupy herself with weaker images, further than these she ventures not, but shrinks from the visible fulness of expression as her limit Thus, if Laokoon sighs, the imagination can hear him shriek; but if he shrieks, it can neither rise a step higher above nor descend a step below this representation, without seeing him in a condition which, as it will be more endurable, becomes less interesting It either hears him merely moaning, or sees him already dead.

Furthermore, this single moment receives through art an unchangeable duration; therefore it must not express anything, of which we can think only as transitory. All appearances, to whose very being, according to our ideas, it is essential that they suddenly break forth and as suddenly vanish, that they can be what they are but for a *moment*,—all such appearances, be they pleasing or be they horrible, receive, through the prolongation which art gives them, such an unnatural character, that at every repeated glance the impression they make grows weaker and weaker, and at last fills us with dislike or disgust of the whole object. La Mettrie, who got himself painted and engraved as a second Demokritus, laughs *only* the first time we look at him Look at him oftener, and he changes from a philosopher into a fool. His laugh becomes a grin So it is with shrieks, the violent pain which compels their utterance soon either subsides, or destroys its suffering subject altogether If, therefore, even the most patient and resolute man shrieks, he does not do so unremittingly, and it is only the seeming continuance of his cries in art which turns them into effeminate impotence or childish petulance This, at least, the artist of the Laokoon must needs have avoided, even if beauty were not injured by a shriek, and even had his art allowed of his expressing suffering without beauty.

Among the ancient painters, Timomachus seems to have delighted in selecting subjects suited to the display of extreme passion. His raving Ajax and infanticide Medea were celebrated paintings; but, from the descriptions we possess of them, it is plain that he thoroughly understood and judiciously combined that point at which the beholder

is rather led to the conception of the extreme than actually sees it with that appearance with which we do not associate the idea of transitoriness so inseparably as to be displeased by its continuance in art. He did not paint Medea at the instant when she was actually murdering her children, but a few moments before, whilst her motherly love was still struggling with her jealousy. We see the end of the contest beforehand, we tremble in the anticipation of soon recognizing her as simply cruel, and our imagination carries us far beyond anything which the painter could have portrayed in that terrible moment itself. But, for that very reason, the irresolution of Medea, which art has made perpetual, is so far from giving offence, that we are rather inclined to wish that it could have remained the same in nature, that the contest of passions had never been decided, or at least had continued so long that time and reflexion had gained the mastery over fury, and assured the victory to the feelings of the mother. This wisdom of Timomachus has called forth great and frequent praise, and raised him far above another unknown painter, who was foolish enough to draw Medea at the very height of her frenzy, and thus to impart to this fleeting, transient moment of extreme madness a duration that disgusts all nature The poet,[1] who censures him, says very sensibly, whilst addressing the figure itself: "Thirstest thou then ever for the blood of thy children? Is there ever a new Jason, a new Kreusa there to exasperate thee unceasingly?" "Away with thee, even in painting!" he adds, in a tone of vexation.

Of the frenzied Ajax of Timomachus we can form some judgment from the account of Philostratus[2] Ajax did not appear raging among the herds, and binding and slaughtering oxen and rams instead of men; but the master exhibits him sitting wearied with these heroic deeds of insanity, and conceiving the design of suicide;

[1] Philippus, Anthol lib. IV. cap ix ep 10—

Αἰεὶ γὰρ διψᾷς βρεφέων φόνον. ἦ τις Ἰήσων
Δεύτερος, ἢ Γλαύκη τις πάλι σοι πρόφασις,
Ἔρρε καὶ ἐν κηρῷ, παιδοκτόνε——

[2] Vita Apoll lib II cap. xxii.

and that is really the raging Ajax: not because he is just then raging, but because we see that he has been; because we can form the most lively idea of the extremity of his frenzy from the shame and despair which he himself feels at the thoughts of it. We see the storm in the wrecks and corpses with which it has strewn the beach.

CHAPTER IV.

I have passed under review the reasons alleged for the artist of the Laokoon being obliged to set certain bounds to the expression of bodily pain; and I find that they are altogether derived from the peculiar conditions of his art, and its necessary limits and wants. Perhaps hardly any of them would be found equally applicable to poetry.

We will not here examine how far the poet can succeed in depicting physical beauty. It is undeniable, that as the whole infinite realm of the perfectly excellent lies open to his imitation, this outward visible garb, the perfect form of which is beauty, is only one of the least of the means by which he can interest us in his characters. Often he neglects this means entirely, feeling certain, if his hero has once won our regard, of so preoccupying our minds with his nobler qualities that we shall not bestow a thought upon his bodily form, or that if we do think of it, it will be with such favourable prepossessions that we shall, of ourselves, attribute to him an exterior, if not handsome, at least not unpleasing, at any rate he will not permit himself to pay any regard to the sense of sight, in any trait, which is not expressly intended to appeal to it. When Virgil's Laokoon shrieks, does it occur to any one that a widely opened mouth is the necessary accompaniment of a shriek, and that this open mouth is ugly? It is enough that "clamores horrendos ad sidera tollit," whatever it may be to the eyes, is a powerful appeal to the ears. If any one here feels the want of a beautiful picture, the poet has failed to make a due impression on him.

Moreover, the poet is not compelled to concentrate his picture into the space of a single moment. He has it in

his power to take up every action of his hero at its source, and pursue it to its issue, through all possible variations Each of these, which would cost the artist a separate work, costs the poet but a single trait; and should this trait, if viewed by itself, offend the imagination of the hearer, either such preparation has been made for it by what has preceded, or it will be so softened and compensated by what follows that its solitary impression is lost, and the combination produces the best possible effect. Thus, were it really unbecoming in a man to shriek under the violence of bodily pain, what prejudice could this slight and transitory impropriety excite in us against one in whose favour we are already prepossessed by his other virtues? Virgil's Laokoon shrieks, but this shrieking Laokoon is the same man whom we already know and love as a far-sighted patriot and affectionate father. We attribute his cries not to his character, but solely to his intolerable suffering. It is this alone that we hear in them, and by them alone could the poet have brought it home to us.

Who, then, still censures him? Who is not rather forced to own that whilst the artist has done well in not allowing him to shriek, the poet has done equally well in causing him to do so?

But Virgil is here merely a narrative poet. will his justification include the dramatic poet also? One impression is produced by the relation of a person's shriek, another by the shriek itself. The drama designed for the living art of the actor should, perhaps, for that very reason be compelled to confine itself more strictly within the limits of material art In it we do not merely believe that we see and hear a shrieking Philoktetes, we actually do see and hear him. The nearer the actor approaches to nature, the more will our eyes and ears be offended; for it is indisputable that they are so in nature itself when we meet with such loud and violent expressions of pain. Besides, bodily pain generally is not capable of exciting that sympathy which other ills awaken. Our imagination can discern too little in it for the mere sight of it to arouse in us anything of an equivalent emotion. Sophokles, therefore, in making Philoktetes and Hercules moan and cry, shriek and howl, to such an excess, may easily have

offended not a merely conventional sense of propriety, but one grounded upon the very existence of our feelings It is impossible that the coactors in the scene should share his sufferings in the high degree that these unmeasured outbreaks seem to demand These coactors would appear to us, their spectators, comparatively cold, and yet we cannot but regard their sympathies as the measure of our own. If we add, that it is with difficulty, if at all, that the actor can succeed in carrying the representation of bodily pain as far as positive illusion, it becomes a question whether the modern dramatic poets should not rather be praised than blamed for having completely avoided this rock, or at all events doubled it in but a light craft

How many things would appear incontestable in theory, if genius had not succeeded in proving them to be the contrary by fact None of the above considerations are groundless, and still the Philoktetes remains one of the masterpieces of the stage. for a part of them are not applicable to Sophokles, and only by rising superior to the rest has he attained to that beauty of which the timid critic, without this example, would never have dreamt. The following remarks will demonstrate this more exactly.

1. What wonderful skill has the poet shown in strengthening and enlarging the idea of bodily pain. He chose a wound (for the circumstances of the story may also be considered as depending on his choice, inasmuch as he selected the whole legend for the sake of the circumstances favourable to him which it contained); he chose, I say, a wound, and not an internal malady; because the former admits of a more lively representation than the latter, however painful it may be. For this reason, the inward sympathetic fire which consumes Meleager as his mother sacrifices him to her sisterly fury by means of the fatal brand, would be less dramatic than a wound. This wound, moreover, was a punishment divinely decreed. A supernatural poison incessantly raged therein, and only a more violent attack of pain had its periodical duration, at the expiration of which the unhappy man always fell into a benumbing sleep, during which exhausted nature recovered strength to tread again the same path of suffering. Chateaubrun makes him wounded merely by the poisoned

arrow of a Trojan What extraordinary issue was to be expected from so ordinary an occurrence? In the ancient wars every one was exposed to it: how came it, then, that in Philoktetes' case only it was followed by such dreadful consequences? Besides, is not a natural poison, that works for nine whole years, far more improbable than all the fabled wonders with which the Greek has adorned his piece?

2. Sophokles felt full well that, however great and terrible he made the bodily pain of his hero, it would not be sufficient, by itself, to excite any remarkable degree of sympathy. He therefore combined it with other evils, which likewise could not greatly move us of themselves, but which, from this combination, receive the same melancholy colouring, which they in their turn impart to the bodily pain. These evils were a complete absence of human society, hunger, and all the hardships of life, to which a man under such privations and an inclement climate is exposed.[1] Imagine a man in these circum-

[1] When the chorus views the misery of Philoktetes in this combination, it appears to be deeply moved by the consideration of his helpless isolation We hear the sociable Greek in every word they utter About one of these passages I entertain, however, some doubts; it is the following (v 691, 695, Dind.) —

> Ἵν' αὐτὸς ἦν πρόσουρος, οὐκ ἔχων βάσιν,
> οὐδέ τιν' ἐγχώρων,
> κακογείτονα παρ' ᾧ στόνον ἀντίτυπον
> βαρυβρῶτ' ἀποκλαύ-
> σειεν αἱματηρόν.

The common translation of Winsheim renders it thus:

> "Ventis expositus et pedibus captus
> Nullum cohabitatorem
> Nec vicinum ullum saltem malum habens, apud quem gemitum mutuum
> Gravemque ac cruentum
> Ederet."

The translation of Thomas Johnson only differs from the foregoing verbally:

> "Ubi ipse ventis erat expositus, firmum gradum non habens,
> Nec quenquam indigenarum,
> Nec malum vicinum, apud quem ploraret
> Vehementer edacem
> Sanguineum morbum, mutuo gemitu."

stances, but give him health, strength, and industry, and he becomes a Robinson Crusoe, whose lot, though not

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One would fancy that he had borrowed this variation of words from the metrical translation of Thomas Naogeorgus. In his work (which is very scarce, and seems to have been known to Fabricius only through Oporin's Catalogue), he thus renders the passage in question:

"Ubi expositus fuit
Ventis ipse, gradum firmum haud habens,
Nec quenquam indigenam, nec vel malum
Vicinum, ploraret apud quem
Vehementer edacem atque cruentum
Morbum mutuo"

If these translations are right, the praise which the chorus bestows upon the society of our fellow-men is the strongest that can be imagined The miserable one has no one with him; he knows of no friendly neighbour, he would have felt too happy had he been blessed with even a bad man for a neighbour! Thomson, perhaps, had this passage in his thoughts, when he represented Melisander, who likewise had been exposed on a desert island by villains, as saying.—

"Cast on the wildest of the Cyclad isles,
Where never human foot had marked the shore,
These ruffians left me—yet, believe me, Arcas,
Such is the rooted love we bear mankind,
All ruffians as they were, I never heard
A sound so dismal as their parting oars"

He also preferred the society of villains to none at all. A great and excellent meaning! Were it only certain that it was the one which Sophokles intended to convey, but I must unwillingly confess that I cannot extract any sense of the kind from him unless I should prefer to see with the eyes of the old scholiast, who paraphrases the passage as follows, rather than with my own Οὐ μόνον ὅπου καλὸν οὐκ εἶχέ τινα τῶν ἐγχωρίων γείτονα, ἀλλὰ οὐδὲ κακόν, παρ' οὗ ἀμοιβαῖον λόγον στενάζων ἀκούσειε This interpretation has been followed by Brumoy, and by our latest German translator, as well as by those mentioned above The first says, "sans societé même importune", the second, "Deprived of all society, even the most troublesome." My reasons for differing from them are the following. In the first place, it is plain that if κακογείτονα is separated from τιν' ἐγχώρων, and constitutes a distinct clause, the particle οὐδέ must necessarily be repeated before it. Since it is not, κακογείτονα must clearly be taken with τινα, and the comma after ἐγχώρων must be omitted This comma has crept in in consequence of the translation, for I actually find that several simply Greek editions (e g one in 8vo, published at Wittenberg, 1585, which was altogether unknown to Fabricius) are without it, and place the first comma rightly after κακογείτονα. In the second place, can he be justly said to be a bad neighbour, from whom we have reason to expect the στόνον ἀντίτυπον ἀμοιβαῖον, as explained by the scholiast? It is the

indifferent to us, has certainly no great claim upon our sympathy. For we are seldom so contented with human society, that the quiet we enjoy when secluded from it seems without a charm for us; especially under the idea, which flatters every individual, that he can gradually learn to dispense with all external aid. On the other hand, imagine a man afflicted by the most painful and incurable disease, but at the same time surrounded by kind friends who take care that he suffers no want, who as far as it lies in their power alleviate his calamity, and before whom he may freely vent his complaints and sorrows—for such a one we shall undoubtedly feel sympathy, but this sympathy will not endure throughout; and at last we shrug our shoulders and recommend patience. Only when both cases are combined—when the solitary one possesses no control over his own body, when the sick man receives as little assistance from others as he can render himself, and his complaints are wafted away on the desert winds; then, and then only, do we see every misery that can afflict human nature close over the head of the unfortunate one; and then only does every fleeting thought, in which we picture ourselves in his situation, excite shrinking and horror. We see nothing save despair in its most horrible form before us, and no

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office of a friend to share our sighs, but not of a foe. In short, the word κακογείτονα has been misunderstood. It has been rendered as if it were compounded of the adjective κακός, whereas it is compounded of the substantive τὸ κακόν It has thus been translated "an evil companion," whilst the real meaning is "a companion of ill" In the same manner κακόμαντις does not signify a "bad," *i e* a "false, untrue prophet," but a "prophet of evil," nor κακότεχνος a "bad, unskilful artist," but one who used bad arts By *a companion of ill* the poet intends either "one who is visited with the same calamities as ourselves," or "one who, through friendship, shares them with us;" the whole sentence, οὐδ' ἔχων τιν' ἐγχώρων κακογείτονα, therefore, should be translated, "neque quenquam indigenarum mali socium habens." Thomas Franklin, the last English translator of Sophokles, is evidently of my opinion, since he translates κακογείτονα, not by "bad neighbour," but merely by "fellow-mourner"—

"Exposed to the inclement skies,
Deserted and forlorn he lies,
No friend nor fellow-mourner there,
To soothe his sorrow and divide his care"

sympathy is so strong, none melts our whole soul so much, as that which entwines itself with the idea of despair. Of this kind is the sympathy that we feel for Philoktetes, and feel most strongly at the moment when we see him deprived of his bow, the only means he still possessed of prolonging his mournful existence. Oh, the Frenchman who had no understanding to consider this, no heart to feel it, or if he had, was mean enough to sacrifice it all to the wretched taste of his nation! Chateaubrun gives Philoktetes society. He makes a young princess come to him in his desert island; and even she does not come alone, but is accompanied by her governess, whom I know not whether princess or poet needed most. He has left out the whole of the striking scene where Philoktetes plays with his bow, and in its stead has introduced the play of beautiful eyes. Bows and arrows, I suppose, would have appeared but a merry sport to the hero youth of France; nothing, on the contrary, more serious than the scorn of beautiful eyes. The Greek racks us with the shocking apprehension that the miserable Philoktetes will be left on the island without his bow, and pitiably perish. The Frenchman knows a surer road to our hearts: he fills us with fear that the son of Achilles may have to depart without his princess. This the Parisian critics called triumphing over the ancients, and one of them proposed to name Chateaubrun's piece "La difficulté vaincue."[2]

3. After considering the effect of the whole piece, we must pass on to the single scenes, in which Philoktetes no longer appears as the abandoned sick man, but is in hopes of soon leaving the cheerless desert island and again reaching his kingdom, in which, therefore, the whole of his misfortune centres in his painful wound. He moans, he shrieks, he falls into the most horrible convulsions. Against this the objection of offended propriety is properly urged. It is an Englishman who raises it, a man therefore not lightly to be suspected of a false delicacy: and, as already hinted, he adduces very good reasons for his opinion. All feelings and passions, he says, with which others can but little sympathize become offensive

[2] Mercure de France, April 1755, p. 177.

if expressed with too much violence[3] "It is for the same reason that to cry out with bodily pain, how intolerable soever, appears always unmanly and unbecoming. There is, however, a good deal of sympathy even with bodily pain. If I see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, I naturally shrink, and draw back my own leg or my own arm; and when it does fall, I feel it in some measure, and am hurt by it, as well as the sufferer. My hurt, however, is no doubt exceedingly slight, and upon that account, if he makes any violent outcry, as I cannot go along with him, I never fail to despise him."[4] Nothing is more deceitful than laying down general laws for our feelings. Their web is so fine and complicated, that it is scarcely possible even for the most cautious speculation to take up clearly a single thread and follow it amidst all those which cross it. But if speculation does succeed, is any advantage gained? There are in nature no simple unmodified feelings; together with each a thousand others arise. the least of which is sufficient entirely to change the original sensation, so that exceptions multiply upon exceptions, until at last a supposed general law is reduced to a mere experience is some single cases. We despise a man, says the English-

[3] The Theory of Moral Sentiments, by Adam Smith, pt. i sec ii. ch. I

[4] [The translator hopes that the following additional quotation from Adam Smith will not be unacceptable to the reader —

"In some of the Greek tragedies there is an attempt to excite compassion by the representation of the agencies of bodily pain. Philoctetes cries out and faints from the extremities of his sufferings. Hippolytus and Hercules are both introduced as expiring under the severest tortures, which, it seems, even the fortitude of Hercules was incapable of supporting. In all these cases, however, it is not the pain which interests us, but some other circumstance. It is not the sore foot, but the solitude, of Philoctetes which affects us, and diffuses over that charming tragedy that romantic wildness which is so agreeable to the imagination. The agonies of Hercules and Hippolytus are interesting only because we foresee that death is to be the consequence If those heroes were to recover, we should think the representations of their sufferings perfectly ridiculous What a tragedy would that be of which the distress consisted in a colic! Yet no pain is more exquisite These attempts to excite compassion by the representation of bodily pain may be regarded as among the greatest breaches of decorum of which the Greek theatre has set the example."]

man, if we hear him cry out violently under bodily pain. But not always, not for the first time; not when we see that the sufferer makes every possible effort to suppress it. not when we know that he is in other respects a man of firmness, still less when we see him even in the midst of his distress afford proofs of his constancy, when we see that his pain can indeed compel him to shriek, but cannot force him a step further; when we see that he had rather subject himself to a prolongation of this pain than suffer his mode of thought or resolution to undergo the slightest alteration, even though he has reason to hope that by this change his pain would be brought altogether to an end All this is found in the case of Philoktetes Moral greatness consisted, among the Greeks, in an unalterable love of their friends and undying hatred of their foes, and this greatness Philoktetes preserved through all his troubles. His eyes were not so dried up with pain that they had no tears to bestow upon the fate of his former friends; neither was his spirit so subdued by it that to obtain a release from it he could forgive his enemies and willingly lend himself to all their selfish ends And were the Athenians to despise this rock of a man because the waves which were powerless to shake him could at least wring from him some sound? I confess I think that Cicero generally displays but little taste in his philosophy, and least of all in that part of the second book of the Tusculan Questions, where he puffs up the endurance of bodily pain. One would think he wanted to train a gladiator, so hot is his zeal against any expression of pain; in which he appears to find only a want of patience, without reflecting that it is often anything but voluntary, while true bravery can be exhibited in voluntary actions only. In Sophokles' play he hears nothing but Philoktetes' complaints and shrieks, and entirely overlooks his steadfast bearing in other respects How else would he have found occasion for his rhetorical sally against the poets? "Their object surely is to render us effeminate, when they introduce the bravest men weeping" They must let them weep, for the theatre is no arena It became the condemned or mercenary gladiator to do and suffer all with propriety From him no sound of complaint was to be heard, in him no painful

convulsions seen; for since his wounds and death were intended to afford delight to the spectators, it was part of his art to conceal all pain. The least expression of it would have awakened sympathy; and sympathy, frequently awakened, would soon have put an end to these cold revolting spectacles. But to awaken the sensation, which was there forbidden, is the sole aim of the tragic stage Its heroes must exhibit feeling, must express their pain, and let simple nature work within them. If they betray training and constraint, they leave our hearts cold, and prize fighters in the cothurnus at the most do but excite our wonder. Yet this epithet is merited by all the characters in the so-called tragedies of Seneca, and I am firmly convinced that the gladiatorial shows were the principal cause why the Romans always remained so far below mediocrity in the tragic art. The spectators learnt to misapprehend all nature at the bloody spectacles of the amphitheatre, where perhaps a Ktesias might have studied his art, but a Sophokles never could. The most truly tragic genius accustomed to these artificial scenes of death could not have failed to degenerate into bombast and rhodomontade. but such rhodomontade is as little capable of inspiring true heroism as Philoktetes' complaints of producing effeminacy. The complaints are those of a man, the actions those of a hero The two combined constitute the human hero, who is neither effeminate nor hard, but now the one, now the other, as now nature, now principle and duty, require He is the noblest production of wisdom, the highest object for the imitation of art.

4. Sophokles was not contented with having secured his sensitive Philoktetes from all contempt, but has wisely forestalled every objection which Adam Smith's remarks would warrant being raised against him. For although we do not always despise a man for crying out at bodily pain, it is indisputable that we do not feel so much sympathy for him as his cry appears to demand. How then ought the actors who are on the stage with the shrieking Philoktetes to demean themselves? Should they appear deeply moved, it would be contrary to nature; should they show themselves as cold and embarrassed as we are actually wont to be in such cases, an effect in the highest degree inharmonious would be produced upon the spectators.

here create that proper universal interest to which sympathy imparts but a light shading. As soon as the event is decided by the assistance of the oracle, Hercules becomes quiet, and admiration at the resolution he has finally displayed occupies the place of all other emotions. But, in the general comparison of the suffering Hercules with the suffering Philoktetes, we must not forget that the one is a demi-god, the other only a man. The man is ashamed of no complaints, while the demi-god is indignant at finding that his mortal part has such power over his immortal, that it can compel him to weep and moan like a girl.[6] We moderns do not believe in demi-gods, and yet expect that the commonest hero should act and feel like one.

That an actor can carry imitation of the shrieks and convulsions of pain as far as illusion I do not venture either positively to deny or assert. If I found that our actors could not, I should first inquire whether Garrick also would find it impossible; and if my question were answered in the affirmative, I should still be at liberty to suppose that the acting and declamation of the ancients attained a perfection of which we can at this day form no conception.



CHAPTER V.

THERE are critics of antiquity who, on the ground that Virgil's description must have served as a model for the group of the Laokoon, maintain that the latter was indeed the work of Greek sculptors, who, however, flourished in the time of the emperors. Of the ancient scholars who supported this opinion, I will now mention only Bartholomæus Marliani,[1] and of the modern, Montfaucon.[2]

[6] Trach v. 1071. ὅστις ὥστε παρθένος
βέβρυχα κλαίων.

[1] Topographiæ Urbis Romanæ, lib iv. cap. 14: "Et quanquam hi (Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii) ex Virgilii descriptione statuam hanc formavisse videntur," &c.

[2] Suppl. aux Ant Expliq vol i. p 242 "Il semble qu'Agesandre, Polydore et Athénodore, qui en furent les ouvriers, ayant travaille comme à l'envie, pour laisser un monument, qui répondait à l'incomparable description qu'a fait Virgile de Laocoon," &c.

They found, without doubt, an agreement so peculiar, between the work of art and the description of the poet, that they believed it impossible that both should by chance have lighted upon the same circumstances, circumstances, too, of such a nature that they would be the last to force themselves upon the mind. They therefore assumed that, if the question of originality and priority of invention is raised, there is a stronger presumption in favour of the poet than of the artist.

Only they appear to have forgotten that a third alternative is left: that the poet may have copied as little from the artist as the artist from the poet, and both have drawn from a common ancient source, which, according to Macrobius, was probably Peisander.[3] For when the works of this Greek poet were still exant, it was a piece of mere schoolboy knowledge ("pueris decantatum"), that the Roman poet not only imitated, but, as might be said with more truth still, faithfully translated from him, the entire account of the conquest and destruction of Ilium, which constitutes the whole of the second book. Thus, if Virgil had followed Peisander in the story of Laokoon also, the Greek artists would have had no need to seek the guidance of a Latin poet: and the conjecture as to the period to which the work belongs is without foundation.

But if I were compelled to maintain the opinion of Maihani and Montfaucon, I should like to lend them the following means of escaping from this difficulty. Peisander's poems are lost, and we cannot say with certainty what

[3] Saturnal lib v. cap 2: "[Non parva sunt alia,] quæ Virgilius traxit a Græcis, [et carmini suo tanquam illic nata inseruit] Dicturumne me putatis quæ vulgo nota sunt? quod Theocritum sibi fecerit pastoralis operis autorem, ruralis Hesiodum? et quod in ipsis Georgicis tempestatis serenitatisque signa de Arati phænomenis traxerit? vel quod eversionem Trojæ, cum Sinone suo, et equo ligneo, cæterisque omnibus quæ librum secundum faciunt, a Pisandro pæne ad verbum transcripserit? qui inter Græcos poetas eminet opere, quod a nuptiis Jovis et Junonis incipiens universas historias, quæ mediis omnibus sæculis, usque ad ætatem ipsius Pisandri contigerunt, in unam seriem coactas redegerit, et unum ex diversis hiatibus temporum corpus effecerit? In quo opere inter historias cæteras interitus quoque Trojæ in hunc modum relatus est Quæ fideliter Maro interpretando, fabricatus est sibi Iliacæ urbis ruinam. Sed et hæc et talia ut pueris decantata prætereo"

was his version of the story of Laokoon; but it is probable that it was the same as that of which we still find traces in the Greek authors This, however, has as little as possible in common with the narrative of Virgil, who must, therefore, have entirely recast the Greek tradition according to his own ideas. On this supposition his account of the misfortune of Laokoon is his own invention; and consequently, if the artists in their representation are in harmony with him, it is natural to suppose that they lived after his time, and executed their group after his model.

Quintus Calaber, it is true, agrees with Virgil in making Laokoon exhibit a suspicion of the wooden horse; but the anger of Minerva, drawn upon the priest for so doing, is wreaked upon him in a completely different manner. The ground trembles beneath the feet of the warning Trojan; terror and anguish take possession of him, a burning pain rages in his eyes; his brain suffers, he goes mad; he is struck with blindness. Then when, in spite of his blindness, he ceases not to counsel the burning of the wooden horse, Minerva at length sends two terrible serpents, which, however, seize upon his children only. In vain they stretch out their hands towards their father. The poor blind man can afford them no aid, they are torn in pieces, and the serpents disappear under the earth Laokoon himself, however, suffers no injury from them, and that this version is not peculiar to Quintus,[4] but, on the contrary, was commonly received, is proved by a passage from Lykophron, in which he bestows on the serpents[5] the epithet of "child-eaters"

But if this had been the version commonly adopted by the Greeks, Greek artists would hardly have ventured to deviate from it; or, if they had, could scarcely have chanced to do so in exactly the same manner as a Roman poet, unless they had been previously acquainted with him, or perhaps had received an express commission to take his description as their model. On this point, I think, a defender of Montfaucon and Marliani cannot

[4] Paralip xii 383.

[5] Or rather on the serpent, for Lykophron mentions one only —

καὶ παιδοβρῶτος πορκέως νήσους διπλᾶς.

insist too strongly. Virgil is the first and only author who makes the serpents kill the father as well as children[6] The sculptors do this likewise; which,

[6] I do not forget that the picture, on which Eumolpus expatiates in Petronius, might be cited on the opposite side of the question. It represented the destruction of Troy, and particularly the story of Laokoon, under precisely the same circumstances which Virgil has recounted: and since it stood in the same gallery at Naples, in which were some other ancient pictures by Zeuxis, Protogenes, and Apelles, it also might reasonably be supposed to have been an old Greek painting Only I must be permitted to suggest that a novel writer is no historian. This gallery, this picture, this Eumolpus, seem never to have existed anywhere, save in the imagination of Petronius Nothing betrays the entire fiction more plainly than the manifest traces of an almost schoolboy imitation of Virgil's description It is worth while instituting the comparison. The following passage is from Virgil (Æneid, ii 199):—

"Hic alıud majus miseris multoque tremendum
Objicitur magis, atque improvida pectora turbat.
Laocoon, ductus Neptuno sorte sacerdos,
Sollemnis taurum ingentem mactabat ad aras
Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta—
Horresco referens—immensis orbibus angues
Incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad litora tendunt;
Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta jubæque
Sanguineæ superant undas, pars cetera pontum
Pone legit, sinuatque immensa volumine terga
Fit sonitus, spumante salo Jamque arva tenebant,
Ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni
Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora
Diffugimus visu exsangues illi agmine certo
Laocoonta petunt. Et primum parva duorum
Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
Implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus;
Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem et tela ferentem
Corripiunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus, et jam
Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.
Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos,
Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno,
Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit;
Quales mugitus, fugit cum saucius aram
Taurus, et incertam excussit cervice securim"

So also Eumolpus, for we may say of him, as of all other improvisatori, that they are at least as much indebted to their memory for their verses as to their imagination:—

'Ecce alia monstra Celsa qua Tenedos mare
Dorso repellit, tumida consurgunt freta,

seeing that they were Greeks, it would have been unnatural to expect they should; Virgil's description, therefore, probably suggested it.

Undaque resultat scissa tranquillo minor.
Qualis silenti nocte remorum sonus
Longe refertur, cum premunt classes mare,
Pulsumque marmor abiete imposita gemit.
Respicimus, angues orbibus geminis ferunt
Ad saxa fluctus: tumida quorum pectora
Rates ut altæ, lateribus spumas agunt:
Dat cauda sonitum; liberæ ponto jubæ
Coruscant luminibus, fulmineum jubar
Incendit æquor, sibilisque undæ tremunt.
Stupuere mentes Infulis stabant sacri
Phrygioque cultu gemina nati pignora
Laocoonte, quos repente tergoribus ligant
Angues corusci: parvulas illi manus
Ad ora referunt. neuter auxilio sibi,
Uterque fratri transtulit pias vices,
Morsque ipsa miseros mutuo perdit metu.
Accumulat ecce liberum funus parens,
Infirmus auxiliator: invadunt virum
Jam morte pasti, membraque ad terram trahunt
Jacet sacerdos inter aras victima"

The principal features in both passages are the same, and different ideas are expressed in similar words. But these are trifles which strike the eye at once; there are other signs of imitation which, though less palpable, are no less certain If the imitator is a man who has any confidence in himself, he rarely imitates without attempting to beautify; and if this endeavour is, in his opinion, successful, he is fox enough to sweep out with his tail the footsteps which might betray the path by which he had come. But even this vain desire to beautify, and this caution taken to appear original, betray him; for the beautifying process results in exaggeration and unnatural refinement: Virgil says "sanguineæ jubæ"; Petronius, "liberæ jubæ luminibus coruscant." Virgil has "ardentes oculos suffecti sanguine et igni"; Petronius, "fulmineum jubar incendit æquor", Virgil, "fit sonitus spumante salo"; Petronius, "sibilis undæ tremunt" Thus the plagiarist always passes from the great to the monstrous, and from the marvellous to the impossible. The description of the boys being encircled by the serpent-folds is in Virgil a *parergon*, drawn by a few expressive strokes, which tell only of their helplessness and distress. Petronius turns this sketch into a finished picture, and makes the two boys a pair of heroic souls:—

"Neuter auxilio sibi
Uterque fratri transtulit pias vices
Morsque ipsa miseros mutuo perdit metu."

I am fully conscious how far this probability falls short of historical certainty. But, though I intend to draw no further historical conclusion from it, I think it is, at the least, admissible as an hypothesis, on which a critic may be allowed to base his observations. Whether then it is proved, or not, that the sculptors took Virgil's description for their model, I shall merely assume it for the sake of inquiring how they would in that case have executed their task. I have already clearly expressed my opinions upon the subject of the shriek; and perhaps a further comparison may lead to no less instructive observations.

The idea of connecting the father and his two sons in one knot, by means of the murderous serpents, is undeniably a happy one, and evinces an artistic imagination of no ordinary power. To whom is the credit of it due? To the poet, or the artists? Montfaucon affirms that he can-

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Such self-denial is not expected from either children or men. How much better the Greek understood nature (Quintus Calaber, xii 459) when he makes even the mothers forget their children at the appearance of the horrible serpents, so completely were the efforts of all turned towards their own preservation—

. . . . . ἔνθα γυναῖκες
Οἴμωζον, καί πού τις ἑῶν ἐπελήσατο τέκνων,
Αὐτὴ ἀλευομένη στυγερὸν μόρον.

Another device for hiding their imitation, very common among plagiarists, is that of changing the shadows in the original into lights in the copy, and on the other hand throwing the lights into the background. Virgil takes some pains to render the size of the serpents palpable, because it is on this immense size that the probability of the following scene depends; the noise they cause is but a subordinate idea, intended to beget a more vivid conception of it. Petronius, on the contrary, converts this subordinate idea into a prominent feature, describes the noise with great prolixity, and forgets the size so completely that we are almost left to infer it from the sound. It is difficult to believe that he could have fallen into this impropriety, if he had drawn his description from imagination solely, and had had *no pattern* before him, from which he borrowed his design, though anxious at the same time to conceal his plagiarism. Indeed we may hold it to be a rule that every poetical picture which is overladen in its less important features, while deficient in its weightier, is an unsuccessful imitation; nor can the conclusion be affected by its possessing many lighter beauties, or our being able or unable to indicate the original.

not find it in the poet's work;[7] but I think he has not read him with sufficient attention.

> "Illi agmine certo
> Laocoonta petunt, et primum parva duorum
> Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
> Implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus.
> Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem et tela ferentem
> Corripiunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus."

The poet has described the serpents as of wonderful length. They have wound their folds round the boys, and, when the father comes to the aid of his sons, they seize upon him also ("corripiunt"). Owing to the size they are represented as being, they could not at once have unwound themselves from the sons. There must, therefore, have been a moment when they had already attacked the father with their heads and fore parts, while the folds of their tails still encircled his children. This moment is necessary in the progress of the poetical picture, the poet allows us to become completely conscious of it, but this was not precisely the time for depicting it in detail. That the old commentators actually detected it seems to be shown by a passage in Donatus.[8] How much less likely, then, would it be to escape the notice of artists, upon whose penetrating sight everything that can be of advantage to them bursts with such speed and significance.

Though the poet describes Laokoon as fettered by so

[7] Suppl. aux Antiq. Expl. t. i. p. 243: "Il y a quelque petite différence entre ce que dit Virgile, et ce que le marbre représente. Il semble, selon ce que dit le poete, que les serpents quittèrent les deux enfants pour venir entortiller le père, au lieu que, dans ce marbre, ils lient en même temps les enfants et leur père."

[8] Donatus ad v. 227, lib. ii. Æneid: "Mirandum non est, clypeo et simulacri vestigiis tegi potuisse, quos supra et longos et validos dixit, et multiplici ambitu circumdedisse Laocoontis corpus ac liberorum, et fuisse superfluam partem." It appears to me, in regard to this passage, that either the *non* at the beginning of the sentence must be omitted, or else that an entire dependent clause is wanting at the end. For since the serpents were of such an extraordinary size, it is certainly to be wondered at that they could hide themselves under the shield of the goddess, unless the shield were itself very large, and belonged to a colossal statue. The confirmation of this supposition was doubtlessly contained in the missing consequent clause, or the *non* has no meaning.

many serpent coils, he carefully avoids mentioning the arms, and thus leaves his hands in perfect freedom.

"Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos."

In this the artists necessarily had to follow his example. Nothing adds so much expression and life to a figure as the movement of the hands, in the case of the passions especially, the most speaking face is meaningless without it. Had the arms been fast locked to the bodies by the folds of the serpents, they would have spread torpor and death over the whole group. They are therefore seen in full play, both in the principal figure and in those with it, and their activity is greatest where the pain is most violent

But this freedom of the hands was the only point in the coiling of the serpents that the artist could have borrowed with advantage from the poet. Virgil tells us that the monsters wound themselves twice round both the body and neck of their victim, while their heads towered high above him.

"Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis."

Now this picture satisfies the imagination excellently; the noblest parts of the body are compressed to suffocation, and the poison flows directly up to the face; yet, in spite of this, it was no picture for the artist, whose object was to exhibit in the body the pain and workings of the poison Now, to enable us to perceive these, the upper parts of the frame had to be left as free as possible, and all external pressure avoided, by which the play of the suffering nerves and working muscles might be weakened and diverted The twofold coils of the serpents would have concealed the whole body, and left that painful contraction of the stomach, which is so expressive, altogether invisible. Those parts of the body which would have been still exposed above, below, or between the folds, would have been seen amidst compressions and distensions, the effect not of inward pain but of external pressure. Again, by the neck being twice encircled, that pyramidal culmination of the group, which is so pleasing to the eye, would have been entirely destroyed, and the

pointed heads of the serpents, projecting from the mass and shooting into the air, would have produced such a sudden falling off in proportion that the form of the whole would have become offensive in the extreme. There are designers who have been foolish enough, in spite of this, to adhere closely to the poet. To take one example among several, we may learn with repugnance the effect of such an imitation from a drawing by Frank Cleyn.[9] The ancient sculptors saw at a glance that in this case their art required an absolute difference of treatment; they removed all the coils from the body and neck to the thighs and feet. Here they could conceal and squeeze as much as was necessary, without causing any detriment to the expression. Here, moreover, they awakened the idea of suddenly checked flight, and of a kind of immobility, which is of the greatest advantage to the artificial prolongation of the same attitude.

I know not how it has happened that this obvious difference in the coiling of the serpents, between the work of art and the description of the poet, has been passed over in complete silence by the critics. It exalts the wisdom of the artists just as much as the other difference, which they have all remarked, but have sought to justify rather than ventured to approve. I mean the difference in respect to drapery. The Laokoon of Virgil is arrayed in his priestly garments; while in the group both he and his sons appear entirely naked. There are some who have detected a gross absurdity in a king's son and a priest officiating at a sacrifice being thus represented. And to these objectors the critics of art answer in all seriousness that to be sure it is an error against conventionality, but that the artists were forced into it because they could not attire their figures in becoming robes. Sculpture, say they, cannot imitate any stuffs; thick folds produce a bad effect; out of two evils therefore we must choose the least, and

[9] In the splendid (large folio) edition of Dryden's Virgil (published in London 1697). And even in this picture the serpents are only coiled once round the body, and scarcely at all round the neck If so mediocre an artist require any further justification, the only plea that can be urged in his favour is that prints are intended to serve merely as illustrations of the text, and are not to be looked on as independent works of art.

rather run counter to truth itself than offend in respect to the drapery.[10] If the ancient artists would have smiled at the objection, I know not what they would have said to the reply. Art could not be reduced to a lower level than it is by this defence. For supposing that sculpture could have imitated the difference of texture as well as painting, would it have been necessary for the Laokoon to have been draped? Should we have lost nothing beneath this drapery? Has a garment, the work of a slavish hand, as much beauty as an organic body, the work of everlasting Wisdom? Does it demand the same powers? Is it of the same merit? Is it equally honourable to imitate the one as the other? Is deception all that our eyes require? Is it of no importance to them by what they are deceived?

In poetry a garment is no garment; it conceals nothing. Our imagination sees everything beneath it. Laokoon may have robes in Virgil or not, his sufferings are visible to the imagination in every part of the body, as much in one case as in the other. It sees indeed the priestly fillet encircle his brow, but the brow is not hidden. Nay, this fillet is not only no hindrance, it even strengthens the idea which we form of the calamity of the sufferer:—

"Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno."

[10] This is the judgment of De Piles himself in his notes to Du Fresnoy, v. 210. "Remarquez s'il vous plaît, que les draperies tendres et légères, n'étant données qu'au sexe féminin, les anciens sculpteurs ont évité, autant qu'ils ont pu, d'habiller les figures d'hommes; parce qu'ils ont pensé, comme nous avons déja dit, qu'en sculpture on ne pouvait imiter les étoffes et que les gros plis faisaient un mauvais effet. Il y a presque autant d'exemples de cette vérité, qu'il y a parmi les antiques de figures d'hommes nuds. Je rapporterai seulement celui du Laocoon, lequel selon la vraisemblance devrait être vêtu. En effet, quelle apparence y a-t-il qu'un fils de Roi, qu'un prêtre d'Apollon se trouvât tout nud dans la cérémonie actuelle d'un sacrifice; car les serpents passèrent de l'île de Ténédos au rivage de Troye, et surprirent Laocoon et ses fils dans le temps même qu'il sacrifiait à Neptune sur le bord de la mer, comme le marque Virgile dans le second livre de son Énéide. Cependant les Artistes qui sont les auteurs de ce bel ouvrage ont bien vu, qu'ils ne pouvaient pas leur donner de vêtements convenables à leur qualité, sans faire comme un amas de pierres, dont le masse ressemblerait à un rocher, au lieu des trois admirables figures, qui ont été et qui sont toujours l'admiration des siècles. C'est pour cela que, de deux inconvénients, ils ont jugé celui des draperies beaucoup plus fâcheux que celui d'aller contre la vérité même."

His priestly dignity avails him not, even its emblem, that which above everything wins him respect and honour, is drenched and polluted by the poisoned foam. But the artist must resign these subordinate ideas if the main subject is not to suffer. Had he left Laokoon only this fillet, he would in a great degree have weakened the expression; for the brow, which is the seat of it, would have been in part concealed. Thus, as formerly in the case of the shriek, he sacrificed expression to beauty, he here offers up conventionality to expression. Conventionality was especially but lightly esteemed by the ancients. They felt that the highest aim of their art led to its complete rejection. Beauty is that highest aim: necessity invented garments; and what has art in common with necessity? I grant that there is also a beauty in drapery, but can it be compared with that of the human form? And shall he who can attain to the greater rest content with the less? I much fear that the most perfect master in drapery shows by that very talent wherein his weakness lies.

CHAPTER VI.

My hypothesis, that the artists have imitated the poet, does not amount to a disparagement of them. Nay, through this imitation, their wisdom is shown in the most favourable light. They followed the poet, without suffering themselves to be misled by him even in the merest trifles. They were indeed furnished with their design, but, since this design had to be transferred from one art to another, they found ample opportunity for the exercise of original thought. And the original ideas, displayed in their deviations from their model, are a proof that they excelled in their own art as much as the poet in his.

I will now invert my hypothesis, and assume that the poet has copied the artists. There are scholars who maintain that this is the truth,[1] but I cannot discover that they

[1] Maffei, Richardson, and more lately still Herr von Hagedorn (Betrachtungen uber die Malerei, p 37. Richardson, Traité de la Peinture, tome iii p. 513) De Fontaines scarcely deserves to be added

have any historical grounds for such a belief They probably looked upon the group as so supremely beautiful that they could not persuade themselves it belonged to the late period to which it is usually ascribed, it must, they thought, have belonged to the age when art was in its fullest bloom, since that alone seemed worthy of it.

It has been shown that, excellent as Virgil's description is, there are several features in it of which the artist could make no use. This conclusion limits the general principle, "that a good poetical picture will necessarily produce an equally good material painting, and that a poet's description is only so far good as the artist can follow it in all its details" This limitation one is inclined to assume, even before we see it confirmed by examples, if we simply consider the wide sphere of poetry, the boundless field of our imagination, and the spirituality of its images; a great and various throng of which can be placed in the closest juxtaposition, without concealing or disfiguring each other, which perhaps would be the effect that the objects themselves, or their natural symbols, would produce in the narrow limits of space and time.

But if the less cannot contain the greater, the less can be comprised in the greater. I mean, although each trait of which the descriptive poet avails himself need not necessarily have as good effect upon the other surface, or in marble, yet could not every detail of which the artist avails himself be just as effective in the work of the poet? Indisputably! for that which is beautiful in a work of art is beautiful not to our eyes but to our imagination, affected by their means. Thus, as the same image may be raised afresh in our imagination by means either of arbitrary or natural symbols, so the same pleasure, though not the same degree of it, must on each occasion be again excited.

But, admitting this, I must acknowledge that to me the supposition that Virgil imitated the artists appears far more incomprehensible than its converse. If the artists

to this list He maintains certainly in the notes to his translation of Virgil that the poet had the group in his mind, but he is ignorant enough to assert that it is the work of Pheidias.

have copied the poet, I can account and answer for all their deviations from him: they were compelled to deviate, for the very details, which would have offended against harmony in them, found harmonious expression in the other. But there is no cause for the deviation of the poet. If in each and every point he had faithfully followed the group, would he not still have transmitted to us a most excellent picture?[2] I well understand how his

[2] I cannot refer to anything more decisive, in this respect, than the poem of Sadoleto. It is worthy of an ancient poet, and, since it may well serve instead of an engraving, I venture upon inserting it whole.

"DE LAOCOONTIS STATUA JACOBI SADOLETI CARMEN.

Ecce alto terræ e cumulo, ingentisque ruinæ
Visceribus, iterum reducem longinqua reduxit
Laocoonta dies. Aulis regalibus olim
Qui stetit, atque tuos ornabat, Tite, penates.
Divinæ simulacrum artis, nec docta vetustas
Nobilius spectabat opus, nunc celsa revisit
Exemptum tenebris redivivæ mœnia Romæ.
Quid primum summumve loquar? miserumne parentem
Et prolem geminam? an sinuatos flexibus angues
Terribili aspectu? caudasque irasque draconum
Vulneraque et veros, saxo moriente, dolores?
Horret ad hæc animus, mutaque ab imagine pulsat
Pectora non parvo pietas commixta tremori.
Prolixum bini spiris glomerantur in orbem
Ardentes colubri, et sinuosis orbibus errant,
Ternaque multiplici constringunt corpora nexu.
Vix oculi sufferre valent, crudele tuendo
Exitium, casusque feros: micat alter, et ipsum
Laocoonta petit, totumque infraque supraque
Implicat et rabido tandem ferit ilia morsu.
Connexum refugit corpus, torquentia sese
Membra, latusque retro sinuatum a vulnere cernas.
Ille dolore acri et laniatu impulsus acerbo,
Dat gemitum ingentem, crudosque evellere dentes
Connixus, lævam impatiens ad terga Chelydri
Objicit: intendunt nervi, collectaque ab omni
Corpore vis frustra summis conatibus instat.
Ferre nequit rabiem, et de vulnere murmur anhelum est.
At serpens lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat
Lubricus, intortoque ligat genua infima nodo.
Absistunt suræ, spirisque prementibus arctum
Crus tumet, obsepto turgent vitalia pulsu,
Liventesque atro distendunt sanguine venas.
Nec minus in natos eadem vis effera sævit
Implexuque angit rapido, miserandaque membra

imagination, working of its own accord, could lead him to this or that detail, but I cannot conceive any reason why his judgment should feel itself compelled to change the beautiful details which were already before his eyes for others. I think, too, that if Virgil had had the group of Laokoon for a model, he would hardly have been able to put such restraint upon himself as to have left as it were to mere conjecture the entanglement of all three bodies in a single knot. It would have struck his eyes too vividly; he would have experienced from it an effect too excellent not to have brought it more prominently forward in his description. I have said that this was not precisely the time for depicting this entanglement in detail.[3] No; but the addition of a single word might easily, we may conceive, have distinctly expressed it without removing it

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Dilacerat, jamque alterius depasta cruentum
Pectus suprema genitorem voce cientis,
Circumjectu orbis, validoque volumine fulcit.
Alter adhuc nullo violatus corpora morsu,
Dum parat adducta caudam divellere planta,
Horret ad aspectum miseri patris, hæret in illo,
Et jam jam ingentes fletus, lachrymasque cadentes
Anceps in dubio retinet timor. Ergo perenni
Qui tantum statuistis opus jam laude nitentes,
Artifices magni (quanquam et melioribus actis
Quæritur æternum nomen, multoque licebat
Clarius ingenium venturæ tradere famæ)
Attamen ad laudem quæcunque oblata facultas
Egregium hanc rapere, et summa ad fastigia niti.
Vos rigidum lapidem vivis animare figuris
Eximii, et vivos spiranti in marmore sensus
Inserere, aspicimus motumque iramque doloremque,
Et pene audimus gemitus: vos extulit olim
Clara Rhodos, vestræ jacuerunt artis honores
Tempore ab immenso, quos rursum in luce secunda
Roma videt, celebratque frequens: operisque vetusti
Gratia parta recens. Quanto præstantius ergo est
Ingenio, aut quovis extendere fata labore,
Quam fastus et opes et inanem extendere luxum."

(V. Leodegarii a Quercu Farrago Poematum, T. ii. p. 63.) Gruter also has inserted this poem, together with some others of Sadoleto's in his well-known collection (Delic. Poet. Italorum Parte alt. p. 582). His version, however, is very inaccurate; *e.g.* for bini, v. 14, he reads vivi; for errant, v. 15, oram, &c.

[3] [See p. 39, *above*.]

from that background in which the poet was obliged to leave it. What the artist could express without this word would not have been left unexpressed by the poet had he already seen it put forward by the artist.

The artist had the most urgent reasons for not allowing the suffering of Laokoon to break forth into a cry, but if the poet had had before him in the work of art so moving a union of pain and beauty, was there anything to oblige him to pass by so completely the manly dignity and high-souled patience which this union suggests, and to shock us at once with the horrible shriek of his Laokoon? Richardson says, "Virgil's Laokoon was obliged to shriek, because it was the poet's aim not so much to excite compassion for him as alarm and horror among the Trojans." I will allow it, although Richardson does not appear to have reflected that the poet does not give this narrative in his own person, but represents Æneas as relating it, and relating it in the presence of Dido, upon whose sympathy he could not work too strongly. However, it is not the shriek which surprises me, but the absence of all that gradation in introducing it to which the poet must have been led had he, as we are assuming, had the work of art for his model. Richardson adds,[4] "The story of Laokoon is only intended as a prelude to the pathethic description of the final destruction of the city; the poet, therefore, abstained from making it more interesting, that our attention, which this last horrible night fully demands, might not be previously engrossed by the misfortune of a single citizen." But that is attempting to look at the whole scene from the picturesque point of view from which it cannot possibly be viewed. The misfortune of Laokoon and the destruction of the city are not, with the poet, connected pictures. The two form no whole such as our eyes either could or ought to take in together at a glance, in which case only would there be a fear that our mind should dwell more upon Laokoon than upon the burning town.

[4] De la Peinture, tome iii p 516: "C'est l'horreur que les Troïens ont conçue contre Laocoon, qui était nécessaire à Virgile pour la conduite de son Poeme, et cela le mène à cette description pathétique de la destruction de la patrie de son héros. Aussi Virgile n'avait garde de diviser l'attention sur la dernière nuit, pour une grande ville entière, par la peinture d'un petit malheur d'un Particulier."

The description of the one follows upon that of the other, and, however affecting the first may be, I do not see what disparagement it can bring upon its successor, unless it be that in itself the second is not sufficiently pathetic.

The poet would have had less reason still for altering the coils of the serpents. In the work of art they occupy the hands and confine the feet of their victims. Pleasing as is this arrangement to the eyes, so the image of it which is left upon the imagination is vivid. Indeed it is so expressive and clear that the representation of it by words is but little weaker than its material representation.

"Micat alter, et ipsum
Laocoonta petit, totumque infraque supraque
Implicat, et rabido tandem ferit ilia morsu.
. . . .
At serpens lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat
Lubricus, intortoque ligat genua infima nodo."

These are lines of Sadoleto's, which without doubt would have come more graphically from Virgil, if a visible model had fired his imagination, and which then would certainly have been better than those he has now left us in their place:—

"Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis."

These traits certainly fill our imagination, but it must not be allowed to dwell upon them, it must not attempt to realize them; it must look at one time only on the serpents, at another only on Laokoon, it must not seek to image to itself the group which the two produce together; as soon as it thinks on this it begins to be offended by Virgil's picture, and finds it highly inartistic.

But even if the alterations which Virgil had made in a borrowed model were not unhappy, still they would have been merely arbitrary. Imitation is an effort to produce a resemblance, but can a person be said to aim at this whose changes overstep the line of necessity? Further, when a man thus exceeds, it is clear that it is not his

design to produce resemblance; that, therefore, he has not imitated.

Not the whole, it might be answered, but perhaps this or that part. Suppose it so; still, which are these single parts in which the harmony between the description and the work of art is so close that the poet might appear to have borrowed them from it? The father, the children, the serpents, all these did legend transmit to the poet no less than to the artist. Setting aside what was traditional, they do not agree in anything except in this, that both entangle father and children in a single serpent-knot. But the idea of this arose from the altered circumstance of the father's being smitten with exactly the same calamity as his children. This alteration, however, as was mentioned above, appears to have been made by Virgil.[5] for the Greek tradition gives an entirely different account. Consequently, if in consideration of this entanglement being common to both we must assume an imitation on the one side or the other, it is more natural to do so on the side of the artist than on that of the poet In every other respect the one differs from the other, only with this distinction, that if it is the artist who has made these changes. they are still compatible with an intention of imitating the poet because the end and limits of his art compelled him to them; if, on the contrary, the poet should be thought to have imitated the artist, all the above-mentioned deviations are proofs against this pretended imitation; and those who, in spite of them, continue to support it, can only mean that they believe the work of art must be of greater antiquity than the description of the poet

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN it is said that the artist imitates the poet, or the poet the artist, two different meanings may be conveyed. Either the one makes the work of the other the actual object of his imitation, or the two have the same object, and the one borrows from the other the way and manner of imitating it.

[5] [See p 36, *above*]

When Virgil describes the shield of Æneas, he imitates the artist, who made it, according to the first signification of the term. The work of art, not what is represented upon it, is the object of his imitation, and even though he does describe at the same time what is seen set forth upon it, he describes it as a part of the shield, and not as the thing itself. If Virgil, on the contrary, had imitated the group of Laokoon, this would have been an imitation of the second kind, for he would not have imitated the group itself, but what that group represented; borrowing from the former the features only of his imitation.

In the first kind of imitation the poet is original, in the second he is a plagiarist. The first is a part of that universal imitation, of which the essence of his art consists, and he works as a genius; his subject may be the work either of another art, or of Nature herself. The second, on the contrary, degrades him altogether from his dignity, instead of the thing itself, he imitates imitations of it, and offers us cold reminiscences of the traits of another man's genius, for original features of his own.

If, however, the poet and the artist cannot help frequently contemplating those objects, which are common to both, from the same point of view, it must happen that in many cases their imitations harmonize, without the least copying or rivalry between the two having taken place. These coincidences between contemporaneous artists and poets, in the case of things which are no longer existent, may lead to mutual illustration. But to push this kind of illustration to such refinements that coincidence is converted into design; and to impute to the poet, especially in every trifle, a reference to this statue or that painting, is to render him a very doubtful service; and not him alone, but the reader also, to whom the most beautiful passages are by these means rendered, if you will, very significant, but at the same time terribly cold.

This is at once the aim and the error of a well-known English writer. Spence wrote his 'Polymetis'[1] with a

[1] The first edition is of 1747, the second of 1755, and bears the title 'Polymetis, or An inquiry concerning the agreement between the works of the Roman poets and the remains of the ancient artists, being an attempt to illustrate them *mutually* from one another. In

great deal of classical learning, and an intimate acquaintance with the extant works of ancient art. In his design of illustrating by these the Roman poets, and of extracting from them, in return, a solution of hitherto unexplained ancient works of art, he has often succeeded happily. But, in spite of this, I maintain that his book must be absolutely intolerable to every reader of taste.

It is natural, when Valerius Flaccus describes the winged lightning upon the Roman shields—

"(Nec primus radios, miles Romane, corusci
Fulminis et rutilas scutis diffuderis alas),"

that this description should appear far more full of meaning to me if I see the representation of such a shield upon an old monument.[2] It is quite possible that the ancient armourers may, on their helmets and shields, have represented Mars in that hovering posture above Rhea in which Addison believed he saw him on a coin,[3] and that

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ten books, by the Rev. Mr. Spence, London, printed for Dodsley, fol An abridgment also which Mr Tindal has made from this work has already been printed more than once.

[2] Val Flaccus, lib VI 55—Polymetis, Dial. vi p 50

[3] I say "may have," but the chances are ten to one that it is not the case Juvenal is speaking of the early times of the republic, when its citizens were still unacquainted with splendour and luxury, and the soldier employed the gold and silver of which he had despoiled his foe only for the decoration of his horse-trappings and arms (Sat. xi 100–107)

"Tunc rudis et Graias mirari nescius artes
Urbibus eversis prædarum in parte reperta
Magnorum artificum frangebat pocula miles,
Ut phaleris gauderet equus, cælataque cassis
Romuleæ simulacra feræ mansuescere jussæ
Imperii fato, geminos sub rupe Quirinos,
Ac nudam effigiem clypeo fulgentis et hasta,
Pendentisque Dei perituro ostenderet hosti."

The soldier broke up costly cups, the masterpieces of great artists, that he might have a she-wolf and a little Romulus and Remus, wherewith to adorn his helmet, made out of the metal All is intelligible up to the last two lines, where the poet goes on to describe a figure of this kind, wrought upon the helmets of the old soldiers It is easy to see that this figure is intended for Mars, the question is, what is the meaning of the epithet *pendentis*, which he applies to him Rigaltius discovered a gloss which explained it by "quasi ad ictum se inclinantis."

Juvenal had such a helmet or shield in his mind when he alluded to it by a word which, up to the time of Addison, had been a riddle to all commentators. I my-

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Lubinus is of opinion that the figure was upon the shield, and that, as the shield was suspended from the arm, the poet may on this account have applied the epithet "suspended" to the figure. But this is in opposition to the construction, for the subject to *ostenderet* is not *miles* but *cassis*. Britannicus observes, "everything that stands high in the air may be said to be pendent, and therefore this figure either above or upon the helmet may be so called." Others wish to read *perdentis* instead of *pendentis*, in order to create an antithesis with the following *perituro*, which, however, they alone could admire. Let us see what is Addison's opinion about this disputed point. The commentators, he says, are all in error. "The true meaning of the words is certainly as follows. The Roman soldiers, who were not a little proud of their founder and the military genius of their republic, used to bear on their helmets the first history of Romulus, who was begot by the God of War, and suckled by a wolf. The figure of the god was made as if descending upon the priestess Ilia, or, as others call her, Rhea Silvia. . . . As he was represented descending his figure appeared suspended in the air over the vestal virgin, in which sense the word *pendentis* is extremely proper and poetical. Besides the antique basso-relievo (in Bellori), that made me first think of this interpretation, I have since met with the same figures on the reverses of a couple of ancient coins, which were stamped in the reign of Antoninus Pius" (Addison's Travels, Rome, Tonson's edition, 1745, p. 183). Since Spence thinks this discovery of Addison such an extraordinarily happy one as to quote it as a pattern of its kind, and a very strong example of the use which may be made of the works of the old artists in illustrating the Roman classic poets, I cannot refrain from entering into a somewhat closer examination of this explanation. (Polymetis, Dial. vii. p. 77.) Now firstly, I must observe that it is not probable that the mere sight of the bas-relief and the coins would have recalled the passage in Juvenal to Addison's memory, had he not at the same time recollected that in the old scholiast who reads *venientis* instead of *fulgentis* in the last line but one he had seen the gloss "Martis ad Iliam venientis ut concumberet." If, however, we reject the reading of the scholiast and adopt the same as Addison himself, there is nothing to lead to the supposition that the poet had Rhea in his mind. Consider if it would not manifestly be a hysteronproteron for him to speak of the wolf and the twins, and afterwards mention for the first time the event to which they were indebted for their existence. Rhea is not yet a mother, and the children are already lying under the rocks. Consider if a love-scene would be altogether a suitable device for the helmet of a Roman soldier. The soldier was proud of the divine origin of his founder; that was sufficiently testified by the she-wolf and the infants, and it by no means follows that he would have wished to exhibit Mars in the conception of an action in which he was anything but the terrible

self seem to feel the passage in Ovid where the wearied Cephalus calls upon the cooling breezes.

"Aura . . . . venias . . . . . .
Meque juves, intresque sinus, gratissima, nostros!"

Mars It is no reason that, because the surprise of Rhea is found represented on ever so many old marbles and coins, it was also adapted for a piece of armour. Besides, where are the marble and the coins on which Addison discovered it, and where saw he Mars in this hovering attitude? The ancient bas-relief to which he appeals ought to be found in Bellori; but we search through the Admiranda, a collection of the finest antique bas-reliefs, for it in vain I cannot find it, nor can Spence have found it either there or elsewhere, as he makes no allusion to it whatever All, therefore, depends upon the coin Let us look at this, then, in Addison's own work. There is a Rhea in a reclining posture, and as the die-cutter had no room to draw the figure of Mars on the same ground with her he has placed him a little higher. This is all Beyond this there is not the slightest appearance of hovering It is true that in the engraving which Spence gives of it this hovering attitude is very strongly expressed, the upper part of the body is thrown considerably forwards. It is plain that the figure is not standing, and if it cannot be falling, it must needs be hovering. Spence says that he himself is in possession of this coin. It would be harsh to call a man's integrity into question, even concerning a trifle. But a prejudice once adopted exercises an influence even upon our eyes; besides, he may have permitted his artist to strengthen the expression which he fancied he himself discovered upon the coin, that his reader might feel as little doubt upon the subject as himself. There is no doubt, at any rate, that Spence and Addison both refer to the same coin, and that this being the case the latter has either greatly misrepresented or the former greatly beautified it I have yet another objection to urge against this assumed hovering attitude of Mars, viz that a body hovering without any visible cause by which the effect of its gravity is counteracted is an incongruity of which no instance is to be found among the ancient works of art It is not even permitted in modern painting; but if a body is suspended in the air, it must either have wings, or must appear to rest upon something, though it be only a cloud. When Homer represents Thetis as ascending from the beach to Olympus on foot—

Τὴν μὲν ἄρ' Οὔλυμπόνδε πόδες φέρον —*Iliad*, xviii 148,

Count Caylus displays too just a comprehension of the necessities of art to permit the goddess to step through the air so freely. She is to take her way upon a cloud ('Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade,' p. 91), just as for the same reason he, on another occasion, places her in a chariot (p. 131), though the poet's description expressly contradicts him How indeed could it be otherwise? Although the poet teaches us to image to ourselves the goddess clothed in the human form, he is far

and his mistress Procris takes this "Aura" to be the name of a rival—I seem, I say, to feel this passage more natural

from entertaining any idea of gross and heavy matter, and animates her human form with a power which exempts her from our laws of motion. But how could painting draw a distinction between the bodily figure of a god and of a man, which would be sufficiently striking to prevent our eyes from being offended at seeing completely different principles of motion, gravity, and equilibrium observed in their treatment? How but by conventional *signs; and in reality* a pair of wings and a cloud are nothing else. But of this more in another place. For the present it is sufficient to require from the advocates of Addison's opinion that they should show us a figure upon any other monument of *antiquity, suspended* as freely and absolutely in the air as the Mars on Addison's coin is supposed to be. It is not likely that this Mars was the only specimen of its kind, or that tradition had transmitted any circumstance which rendered this hovering attitude indispensable in this particular instance *Not the slightest* trace of such an idea can be found in Ovid (Fast. lib. i.) Nay more, such a circumstance cannot be reconciled with the other extant ancient works of art which represent the same story, and in which Mars is manifestly not hovering but walking. Let us turn to the bas-relief in Montfaucon (Suppl. tom i p. 183), the original of which, if I am not mistaken, is at Rome in the Mellini palace Rhea is lying asleep under a tree, while Mars is approaching her with stealthy footsteps, and his right hand stretched backwards with that significant movement by which we beckon to those behind us either to stand still or to follow quietly. His posture here is precisely the same as upon the coin, except that on the coin the lance is *placed* in the right hand, but upon the bas-relief in the left So many celebrated statues and bas-reliefs are found copied upon coins, that it was probably the case here. As for the difference between the two, the die-cutter did not appreciate the expression contained in the *backward* motion of the hand, and therefore thought it better to fill it with the lance If all this is taken together, how little probability does Addison's hypothesis still retain, scarcely more indeed than bare possibility Yet where are we to look for a better explanation, if this is worth *nothing*? It may be that there is a better among those, which Addison rejected But if not, what then? The passage of the poet is corrupt, *let it remain* so Remain so it will, though twenty new explanations of it should be proposed Such as the following, for instance: *that pendentis* should be taken in its figurative sense, as equivalent to "uncertain, irresolute, undecided," *Mars pendens* would in that case convey the same meaning as Mars incertus, or "Mars communis" "Dii communes sunt," says Servius (ad v 118, lib xii Æneid), "Mars, Bellona, Victoria, quia hi in bello utrique parti favere possunt," and the whole line—

"Pendentisque Dei (effigiem) perituro ostenderet hosti"

—would then mean that the old Roman soldier was wont to bear the image of the god, the protector of his foe as well as of himself, under

when I see upon the works of art of the ancients that they actually personified the gentle breezes, and under the name of "Auræ" worshipped a kind of female sylph.[4] I admit that, when Juvenal compares an empty fellow of rank with a Hermes, we should have great difficulty in finding the similarity in this comparison, unless we had seen such a Hermes, and knew it to be a worthless column, which only bears the head, or at most the trunk, of the god, and which from the absence therefrom of hands and feet calls up the idea of inactivity.[5] Illustra-

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the very eyes of his enemy, who was none the less destined to fall by his hand A very fine idea, attributing the victories of the ancient Romans to their own bravery rather than to the partial assistance of their progenitor. For all that "non liquet"

[4] "Till I got acquainted," says Spence (Polymetis, Dial xiii p. 208), "with these auræ (or sylphs), I found myself always at a loss in reading the known story of Cephalus and Procris, in Ovid I could never imagine how Cephalus's crying out 'Aura venias' (though in ever so languishing a manner) could give anybody a suspicion of his being false to Procris As I had been always used to think that Aura signified only the air in general, or a gentle breeze in particular, I thought Procris's jealousy less founded than the most extravagant jealousies generally are; but when I had once found that Aura might signify a very handsome young lady as well as the air, the case was entirely altered; and the story seemed to go on in a very reasonable manner." I am not going to recall in my note the approbation which I have bestowed in my text upon this discovery, on which Spence evidently plumes himself But I cannot omit observing that the passage of the poet would be quite natural and comprehensible without it. All that was required to be known was, that among the ancients Aura was not an unusual name for women. *E g*, it is the name of a nymph in Nonnus (Dionys lib. xlviii), one of the attendants of Diana, who, because she boasted that her beauty was more manly than that of the goddess, was, as a punishment for her presumption, given up while sleeping to the embraces of Bacchus

[5] Juvenalis Satyræ, viii 52–55:—

. . . . "At tu
Nil nisi Cecropides; truncoque simillimus Hermæ:
Nullo quippe alio vincis discrimine, quam quod
Illi marmoreum caput est, tua vivit imago"

If Spence had included the Greek authors in his plan, an old fable of Æsop might perhaps, or perhaps might not, have occurred to him, on which the form of one of these pillars of Hermes throws a light still more beautiful and more indispensable to the proper understanding of its meaning "Hermes," Æsop tells us, "was desirous to learn in what estimation he was held among men He concealed his divinity, and

tions of this kind are by no means to be despised, even though they should not be always necessary or always sufficient. The poet had the work of art before his eyes, not as an imitation, but as a thing independently existing, or else artist and poet had adopted the same conceptions, and consequently, in their representations, there must have been exhibited a coincidence, from which, in turn, conclusions as to the universality of those conceptions might be deduced

But when Tibullus paints the form of Apollo, as he appeared to him in a dream, "the beautiful youth, his

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entered a sculptor's, here he saw a figure of Jupiter, and asked the artist its price 'A drachma,' was the reply. Mercury smiled; 'And this Juno?' he continued 'About the same!' was the answer. Meantime he had espied an image of himself, and was thus cogitating. 'I am the messenger of the gods, I am the author of all gain, men must needs value me highly, and this god here,' he went on, pointing to the figure of himself, 'what may be its price?' 'Oh, if you will buy the other two, I will throw that into the bargain'" Mercury's vanity received a check. The sculptor, however, did not know him, and could not therefore have had any design of wounding his self-love, but there must have been something in the nature of the statues which made the last of such little value that the artist was willing to give it in with the others The lower rank of the god could not have been the reason, for the artist values his productions according to the skill, the industry, and the labour expended upon them, and not according to the rank and estimation in which the beings whom they represent are held It is clear that an image of Mercury, if it was to cost less than one of Jupiter or Juno, must have required less skill and industry in its execution Such was really the case. the statues of Jupiter and Juno were full figures of these divinities, the statue of Mercury was a simple square pillar with his bust at the top of it No wonder, then, the artist could afford to give it in to the purchaser of the other two. Mercury overlooked this circumstance, because his thoughts were wholly employed in the consideration of his seeming pre-eminent merit, his chagrin, therefore, was as natural as deserved It would be vain to search the commentators, translators, or imitators of Æsop for any traces of this explanation, whilst I could quote a whole series, if it were worth the trouble, who have understood the fable literally, that is, have not understood it at all They have either not felt the incongruity which arises from all the images being supposed to be of the same kind, or they have all pushed it too far The price which the artist asks for his Jupiter is perhaps also a difficulty in this fable, for a potter could hardly make a doll for the money A drachma, therefore, must be taken generally as equivalent to any very low price—(Fab. Æsop. 90)

temples encircled by the chaste bay, Syrian odours exhaling from the golden locks, which float about his slender neck; the gleaming white and rosy redness mingled over the whole body, as upon the tender cheeks of a bride first being led to her beloved"—there is no reason why these traits should have been borrowed from celebrated old paintings The "nova nupta verecundia notabilis" of Echion may have been in Rome, may have been copied a thousand and a thousand times; but does that prove that bridal modesty itself had vanished from the world? Because the painter had seen it, was no poet ever to see it more, save in the painter's imitation?[6] Or when another poet describes Vulcan as wearied, and his face, scorched by the furnace, as red and burning, must he have first learnt, from the work of a painter, that toil wearies and heat reddens?[7] Or when Lucretius describes the changes of the seasons, and in natural succession conducts them past us, with the whole train of their effects in earth and air, are we to suppose that he was an ephemeral, who had never lived through a whole year, had never experienced these changes in his own person? Are we to assume his picture to have been drawn after an ancient procession, in which the statues of the seasons were carried about? Did he, necessarily, first learn from these statues the old poetic artifice by which such abstractions are converted into realities?[8] Does not the "Pon-

[6] Tibullus, Eleg IV lib. iii, Polymetis, Dial viii p 84.
[7] Statius, lib. i; Sylv lib v 8, Polymetis, Dial viii. p. 81.
[8] Lucretius, d. R. N. lib v. 736–747.—

"It Ver et Venus, et Veneris prænuntius ante
Pinnatus graditur Zephyrus, vestigia propter
Flora quibus mater præspargens ante viai
Cuncta coloribus egregus et odoribus opplet
Inde loci sequitur Calor aridus, et comes una
Pulverulenta Ceres, et Etesia flabra Aquilonum.
Inde Autumnus adit: graditur simul Evius Evan:
Inde aliæ tempestates, ventique sequuntur,
Altitonans Volturnus et Auster fulmine pollens
Tandem Bruma nives adfert, pigrumque rigorem
Reddit, Hyems sequitur, crepitans ac dentibus Algus"

Spence pronounces this to be one of the most beautiful passages in the whole poem of Lucretius At least it is one of those on which his reputation as a poet is grounded Yet surely he greatly diminishes this honour,

tem indignatus Araxes" of Virgil, that excellent and poetical picture of a flooded river, as it tears away the bridge which had spanned it, lose its whole beauty when the poet is said to be alluding by it to a work of art, in which this river god is represented in the act of breaking a bridge in pieces?[9] What profit can we derive from such illustrations as these, that deprive the poet of any share of honour in the clearest passages, in order to admit but the glimmer of some artist's idea?

I regret that so useful a book as the 'Polymetis' might otherwise have been should, through this tasteless caprice for attributing to the ancient poets, in place of their own genius, familiarity with some other man's, have become repulsive, and far more prejudicial to the classic authors than the watery commentaries of insipid etymologists could ever have been Still more do I regret that in this Spence should have been preceded even by Addison, who, in the laudable desire of elevating an acquaintance with works of art to a means of interpretation, has no less failed to distinguish where the imitation of the artist is becoming, and where derogatory, to the poet[10]

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or rather deprives him of it altogether, when he says that the description was borrowed from some ancient procession of the deities of the seasons, and why? "Such processions," says the Englishman, "of their deities in general were as common among the Romans of old, as those in the honour of the saints are in certain countries to this day. All the expressions used by Lucretius here come in very aptly, if applied to a procession" Excellent reasons! But how much might be said against the last! The epithets which the poet bestows upon the personified abstractions, "Calor aridus—Ceres pulverulenta—Volturnus altitonans—fulmine pollens Auster—Algus dentibus crepitans," prove at once that they derive their being from him, and not from the artist, who must needs have attributed totally different characteristics to them Spence appears, moreover, to have hit upon this idea of a procession through Abraham Preigern, who in his note upon these lines says, "Ordo est quasi pompæ cujusdam, Ver et Venus, Zephyrus et Flora," &c But Spence should have been satisfied to stop here To say "The poet makes the seasons pass by as it were in a procession" is all very well, but to say he borrowed the idea of making them thus pass before us from a procession shows great want of taste

[9] Æneid, lib viii. 728, Polymetis, Dial xiv. p. 230

[10] In various passages of his travels, and in his conversation on ancient coins.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF the similarity which exists between poetry and painting, Spence forms the most curious conceptions possible. He believes that the two arts were, among the ancients, so closely united that they constantly went hand in hand; the poet never suffering himself to lose sight of the painter, nor the painter of the poet. That poetry is the more comprehensive art, that beauties wait on its bidding, which painting would in vain attempt to attain; that it often has good reasons for preferring inartistic beauties to artistic,—of all this he seems never once to have thought; and therefore the most trifling differences that he may observe between the ancient poets and artists involve him in an embarrassment, by which he is driven to the use of the most strange expedients.

The ancient poets, for the most part, attributed horns to Bacchus. "Therefore it is surprising," says Spence, "that these horns are not more commonly seen upon his statues"[1] He advances first one reason, then another, now the ignorance of antiquarians, now the smallness of the horns themselves, which he thinks might have been hidden under the grape-clusters and ivy-leaves which were the constant headdress of the god. He hovers around the true cause, without for a moment suspecting it. The horns of Bacchus were not natural horns, as were those of fauns and satyrs. They were an ornament of the brow, which he could put on, or lay aside, at his pleasure.

> "Tibi cum sine cornibus adstas
> Virgineum caput est,"

is Ovid's festive invocation of Bacchus;[2] so that he could show himself without horns, and did so whenever he wished to appear in his girlish beauty, in which the artist would naturally represent him, and would therefore be compelled to avoid every addition which might produce a bad effect. Such an addition would these horns have been, which were fastened on the chaplet just as they are seen to be on a head in the Royal Cabinet of

[1] Polymetis, Dial. ix. p. 129.

[2] Metamorph lib. iv 19.

Berlin.[3] Such an addition was the chaplet itself, which concealed his beautiful forehead, and therefore occurs in the statues of Bacchus as rarely as the horns themselves, while the poets are as continually attributing it to him as its inventor. The horns and the chaplet furnished the poet with neat allusions to the actions and character of the god. To the artist, on the contrary, they were impediments, preventing the display of higher beauties; and if Bacchus, as I believe, obtained the name of "Biformis, Δίμορφος," for this very reason, viz. that he could manifest himself in beauty as well as in frightfulness, it is perfectly natural that the artists, from his two forms, should have selected that which best corresponded with the purpose of their art.

In Roman poetry, Minerva and Juno often hurl the thunderbolt. Why, asks Spence, do they not do it in their statues also?[4] He answers, "This power was the special privilege of these two goddesses, the reason of which was, perhaps, first learned in the Samothracian mysteries. But since among the ancient Romans the artists were considered as common people, and would therefore be rarely initiated into them, they would doubtless know nothing of it, and what they knew not of they clearly could not represent." There are several questions which I might ask Spence in turn. Did these common persons work on their own account, or at the bidding of patrons of higher rank, who might be instructed in these mysteries? Did artists occupy such an inferior position in Greece also? Were not the Roman artists for the most part born Greeks? and so forth.

Statius and Valerius Flaccus describe an irritated Venus, and that too in such terrible traits that at this moment she might be taken for a fury rather than the goddess of love. Spence looks around among the ancient works of art for such a Venus, but in vain. What is the conclusion he draws? Is it that the poet has greater liberty allowed him than the sculptor and painter? This is the conclusion he should have drawn, but he had once for all adopted, as fundamental, the principle that "scarce anything can be

[3] Begeri Thes. Brandenb. vol. iii. p. 242.
[4] Polymetis, Dial. vi. p. 63.

good in a poetical description which would appear absurd if represented in a statue or picture."[5] Consequently the poets must have committed an error. "Statius and Valerius belong to an age when Roman poetry was already in its decline. In this very passage they display their bad judgment and corrupted taste. Among the poets of a better age such a repudiation of the laws of artistic expression will never be found."[6]

To pronounce such criticisms as these needs but small powers of discernment. I will not, however, in this instance, take up the defence either of Statius or Valerius, but confine myself for the present to a general observation. The gods and spiritual beings, as they are represented by the artists, are not precisely such as to fulfil the requisitions of the poet. With the artist they are personified abstractions, which, in order to be at once recognized, must perpetually retain their appropriate characteristics. With the poet, on the contrary, they are real, acting beings, who, in addition to their general characters, possess other qualities and feelings, which may become the more prominent according to the circumstances in which they are placed In the eyes of the sculptor Venus is only "Love." He must, therefore, attribute to her all the modest, bashful beauty, all the graceful charm, which are the attractions in a beloved object, and which, therefore, we include in our abstract idea of love. If there is the least deviation from this ideal, we can no longer recognize her form. Beauty, but clothed with majesty rather than bashfulness, becomes at once, not a Venus, but a Juno. Charms, but charms commanding, and rather manly than graceful, give us, instead of a Venus, a Minerva. An irritated Venus, a Venus impelled by revenge and fury, is a positive contradiction to the sculptor; for love, as such, is never angry or revengeful. To the poet, on the contrary, Venus is indeed "love," but she is also the goddess of love who, in addition to this character, has her peculiar personality, and consequently must be just as capable of the impulses of aversion as she is of those of affection What wonder, then, if he paints her as

[5] Polymetis, Dial xx p. 311.

[6] *Ibid.* Dial. vii p 74.

inflamed with indignation and fury, especially when it is injured love itself that has kindled these feelings in her?

It is quite true that in groups the artist as well as the poet can introduce Venus, or any other divinity, as apart from her peculiar character, a real and acting being. But in that case their actions must, at least, not contradict their character, even though not the immediate consequences of it. Venus bestows upon her son divine armour. This action the artist can represent as well as the poet. Here there is nothing to prevent him from giving Venus all the charm and beauty which are her attributes as the goddess of love; nay rather, in his work, she will be by these very attributes the more easily recognized. But when Venus wishes to take vengeance upon her contemners, the men of Lemnos, and with wild dilated form, with flushed cheeks, dishevelled hair, and torch in hand, she wraps a sable robe around her, and stormily descends upon a gloomy cloud, this is no moment for the artist, since at this moment there is no feature by which he could render her capable of being recognized. It is only a moment for the poet, because he has the privilege of combining with it another, in which the goddess is wholly Venus, so nearly and so closely, that she is never lost sight of in the fury. This Flaccus does:—

"Neque enim alma videri
Jam tumet; aut tereti crinem subnectitur auro,
Sidereos diffusa sinus. Eadem effera et ingens
Et maculis suffecta genas; pinumque sonantem
Virginibus Stygiis, nigramque simillima pallam."[7]

Statius does the same:—

"Illa Paphon veterem centumque altaria linquens,
Nec vultu nec crine prior, solvisse jugalem
Ceston, et Idalias procul ablegasse volucres
Fertur. Erant certe, media qui noctis in umbra
Divam alios ignes majoraque tela gerentem,
Tartarias inter thalamis volitasse sorores
Vulgarent: utque implicitis arcana domorum
Anguibus, et sæva formidine cuncta replerit
Limina."[8]

[7] Argonaut. lib. ii. 102. [8] Thebaid. lib. v. 61.

But it may be said the poet alone possesses the power of painting with negative traits, and, by mixing the negative and positive together, of uniting two appearances in one. No longer is she the graceful Venus, no longer are her locks bound with golden clasps, no azure robe is floating round her; her girdle is laid aside, she is armed with other torches and larger arrows than her own; furies, like herself, bear her company. But there is no reason, because the artist is compelled to abstain from the exercise of this power, that the poet should do the same. If painting must needs be the sister of poetry, let her not be a jealous sister, and let not the younger forbid the elder every ornament that does not sit well upon herself.

CHAPTER IX.

IF we wish to compare the painter and poet together in single instances, we must first inquire whether they both enjoyed entire freedom; whether, uninfluenced by any external pressure, they could labour at producing the highest effect of their respective arts.

Such an external influence was often exercised by religion over the ancient artist. His work, destined for worship and devotion, could not always be as perfect as if the pleasure of the beholders had been his sole aim. The gods were overburdened with allegorical emblems by superstition, and the most beautiful of them were not everywhere worshipped as such.

Bacchus, in his temple of Lemnos, out of which the pious Hypsipyle, in the form of the god,[1] rescued her

[1] VALERIUS FLACCUS, lib. ii Argonaut 265–273 —

"Serta patri, juvenisque comam vestesque Lyæi
Induit, et medium curru locat æraque circum
Tympanaque et plenas tacita formidine cistas
Ipsa sinus hederisque ligat famularibus artus.
Pampineamque quatit ventosis ictibus hastam,
Respiciens · teneat virides velatus habenas
Ut pater, et nivea tumeant ut cornua mitra,
Et sacer ut Bacchum referat scyphus"

The word *tumeant*, in the last line but one, seems to indicate that the horns of Bacchus were not quite so small as Spence imagines.

father, was represented with horns, and so, without doubt, he appeared in all his temples, for these horns were symbolic, and one of the indications of his being. But the unfettered artist, who executed his Bacchus for no temple, omitted this emblem, and if we, among the extant statues of this god, find none in which he is represented with horns,[2] it is perhaps a proof that none of the consecrated images under which he was actually worshipped are remaining. Besides, it is exceedingly probable that upon these latter, principally, fell the fury of the pious iconoclasts of the first centuries of Christianity; by whom only here and there a work of art, if polluted by no adoration, was sometimes spared.

As, however, among the excavated antiques, pieces of both kinds are to be found, it were to be wished that the title of works of art was confined to those alone in which the artist had the power of really showing himself to be such, in which beauty was his primary and ultimate object. None of the others in which too evident traces testify to religious conformity, deserve this name, because in their case art did not labour on its own account but was a mere helpmate to religion, which, in the material subjects that it afforded for representation, looked rather to significance than to beauty. Yet for all that I do not mean to maintain that it has not frequently embodied all that was significant in the beautiful, or at least, out of indulgence to the art and the fine taste of the age,

[2] The so-salled Bacchus in the gardens of the Medici at Rome (Montfaucon, Suppl. aux Antiq t i. p 254) has little horns, just sprouting from his forehead. But there are some connoisseurs who, for that very reason, think it would be more properly considered a faun In fact such natural horns are a degradation of the human form, and can only become beings who are esteemed a kind of link between man and brute Besides the attitude, the longing look with which he eyes the grapes held over him is more suited to one of his attendants than to the god himself I here recollect what Clemens Alexandrinus says of Alexander the Great (Protrept. p 48, Edit Pott): Ἐβούλετο δὲ καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος Ἄμμωνος υἱὸς εἶναι δοκεῖν, καὶ κεράσφορος ἀναπλάττεσθαι πρὸς τῶν ἀγαλματοποιῶν, τὸ καλὸν ἀνθρώπου ὑβρίσαι σπεύδων κέρατι It was Alexander's express wish that the sculptor should represent him with horns; he was quite content that the human beauty of his form should be degraded by them, provided he should be believed to have sprung from a divine origin.

dispensed with so much of the former that the latter seemed to prevail alone.

If no such distinction is drawn, the connoisseur and antiquary will be constantly coming into collision, because they do not understand one another. If the former, from his insight into the intention of art, maintains that the ancient artist could not have produced this or that work, *i.e.* not as an artist, not spontaneously; the latter stretches this into an assertion that neither religion nor any other external cause, lying outside the region of art, could have caused its execution by the artist, *i.e.* by the artist as a craftsman. Thus he believes he can refute the connoisseur with the first statue that comes to hand, which the latter, without the least scruple, though to the great scandal of the learned world, condemns again to the heap of rubbish from which it was extracted.[3]

[3] When I asserted above that the ancient artists had never executed a fury [see p. 15, and note], it had not escaped me that the furies had more than one temple, in which there certainly must have been statues. In that at Kerynea, Pausanias found some of wood, which were neither large nor in any other respect worthy of remark; but it seemed that art, forbidden to exhibit its powers in the statues of the goddesses, displayed them in those of their priestesses, which stood in the vestibule of the temple, and were most beautifully executed in stone (Pausanias Achaic. xxv. p. 587. edit. Kuhn). Neither had I forgotten that it is supposed that their heads may be seen upon an abraxas made known by Chiffletius, and upon a lamp in Licetus (Dissertat. sur les Furies par Bannier, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, t. v. p. 48). Nor was that urn of Etruscan workmanship in Gori (Mus. Etrusc. tab. 151) unknown to me, upon which Orestes and Pylades are drawn attacked by furies with torches. I spoke, however, of works of art only, from which I believe that all these pieces may be excluded; and even if the last-mentioned work were not to be excluded with the rest, yet when considered from another point of view it serves to corroborate my opinion rather than contradict it. For though beauty was not, generally speaking, the aim of Etruscan artists, yet even here the furies are not denoted by their horrible features so much as by their demeanour and attributes. Indeed so mild is their expression, while they thrust their torches into the very eyes of Pylades and Orestes, that they appear as if they only wished to frighten them in jest. We can only infer how terrible they appeared to the two friends from their terror, but in no way from the figures of the furies themselves. They are therefore furies, and yet not. They perform the office of furies, yet not with that representa-

On the other hand, too much importance may be attributed to the influence exercised by religion upon art. Spence affords us a curious example of this. He found in Ovid that Vesta was not worshipped in her temple under any personal image; and this seemed to him a sufficient ground for concluding that, as a universal rule, there were no statues of this goddess, and that all which had hitherto been considered such represent not Vesta but a vestal.[4] A strange conclusion! Did the artist lose his right to personify a being to whom the poets give a definite personality; whom they represent as the daughter of Saturn and Ops; whom they depict as being in danger of falling under the brutality of Priapus, and all the rest that they tell of her;—did the artist, I say, lose his right to personify, in his own manner, this being, because, in a single temple, she was only worshipped under the symbol of fire? For Spence here further commits the error of extending what Ovid states only of one particular temple

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tion of anger and rage which we are accustomed to associate with the name, not with a brow which, as Catullus says, "expirantis præportat pectoris iras." But lately Herr Winckelmann thought he had discovered a fury, with dishevelled dress and hair, and a dagger in her hand, upon a cornelian in the cabinet of Herr Stosch (Bibl. d. Sch. Wiss. vol. v. p. 30). Hagedorn advises artists, on the strength of this, to introduce furies into their pictures (Betrachtungen über die Malerei, p. 222). Winckelmann himself, however, has since thrown doubts upon this discovery, because he cannot find any grounds for believing that among the ancients the furies were ever armed with daggers instead of torches (Descrip. des Pierres gravées, p. 81). Doubtlessly, therefore, he does not consider the figures upon the coins of the towns Lyrba and Massaura, which Spanheim pronounced Furies, as such (Les Césars de Julien, p. 44), but as a Hecate triformis; for otherwise a fury might here also be seen bearing a dagger in either hand; and it is curious that this too appears with her hair uncovered and dishevelled, whereas in other cases furies are covered with a veil. But supposing Herr Winckelmann's first conjecture to be right, still the case would be the same with the engraved stone and the Etruscan urn; no features can be recognized on account of the minuteness of the work. Besides, engraved stones generally, on account of their use as seals, may be considered as belonging to symbolical language; and the figures upon them may be more frequently arbitrary emblems of their owners than spontaneous productions of the artist.

[4] Polymetis, Dial. vii p. 81.

of Vesta, viz. the one at Rome,[5] to all her temples without distinction, and to her worship universally. It does not necessarily follow that she was worshipped everywhere as she was in this temple at Rome; nay, before Numa built it she was not thus worshipped, even in Italy. Numa did not wish to have any divinity represented by either the human or the brutish form; and the improvement which he effected in the worship of Vesta, without doubt consisted in the rejection of all personal representation of her. Ovid himself informs us that, before the time of Numa, there were statues of Vesta in her temple, which from shame, when their priestess Sylvia became a mother, covered their eyes with maiden hands.[6] That even in the temples which the goddess possessed outside the city, in the Roman provinces, her worship was not precisely that established by Numa appears to be proved

[5] Fasti, lib. vi. v. 295-98.—

"Esse diu stultus Vestæ simulacra putavi:
Mox didici curvo nulla subesse dolo
Ignis inextinctus templo celatur in illo;
Effigiem nullam Vesta, nec ignis, habet."

Ovid is speaking only of the worship of Vesta at Rome, and of the temple which Numa had there built her, of which he says shortly before (v. 259):—

"Regis opus placidi, quo non metuentius ullum
Numinis ingenium terra Sabina tulit."

[6] Fasti, lib. iii. v. 45, 46:—

"Sylvia fit mater; Vestæ simulacra feruntur
Virgineas oculis opposuisse manus."

It is thus that Spence should have compared Ovid's different statements. The poet speaks of *different periods*: in the latter passage, of the age preceding Numa; in the former, of a time subsequent to him. During the former she was worshipped in Italy under personal representations as she had been in Troy, from whence Æneas had introduced her.

". . . Manibus vittas, Vestamque potentem,
Æternumque adytis effert penetralibus ignem,"

says Virgil of the spirit of Hector, after it has counselled Æneas to take flight. Here a distinction is expressly drawn between the eternal fire and Vesta or her statue. Spence cannot have studied the Latin poets with sufficient attention for his purpose, since this passage has escaped him.

by several old inscriptions, in which mention is made of a Pontifex Vestæ.[7] At Corinth, too, there was a temple of Vesta, without any image at all, but with a simple altar, upon which sacrifices were offered to her.[8] But does this show that the Greeks had no statues of Vesta? At Athens there was one in the Prytaneion near the statue of Peace.[9] The people of Jasos boasted that they possessed one upon which, although it stood in the open air, neither snow nor rain ever fell.[10] Pliny mentions one, in a sitting posture, from the hand of Skopas, which in his time might be seen in the Servilian garden at Rome.[11] And, allowing that it is not easy for us to distinguish a mere Vestal from a Vesta itself, does this prove that the ancients could not, still less would not, draw this distinction? Certain emblems of art are manifestly more in favour of the one than of the other. The sceptre, the torch, the palladium can only be presumed to be in the hand of a goddess. The cymbal which Codinus attributes to her might perhaps belong to her only as the *Earth*; or Codinus may not have really known what it was he saw.[12]

[7] Lipsius de Vesta et Vestalibus, cap. 13,

[8] Pausanias, Corinth, lib. ii. cap. 35, sect. 1.

[9] Pausanias, Attic. lib. i. cap. 18, sect. 3.

[10] Polyb. Hist. lib. xvi. 11, Oper. vol. ii. p. 443, edit. Ernesti.

[11] Plinius, xxxvi. 4, 7, edit. Tauch.: "Scopas fecit Vestam sedentem laudatam in Servilianis hortis." Lipsius must have had this passage in his mind when he wrote (De Vesta, cap. 3): "Plinius Vestam sedentem effingi solitam ostendit, a stabilitate"; but he had no right to assume that what Pliny said of a particular piece of Skopas was a characteristic universally adopted in the goddess's statues. He himself remarks that on the coins Vesta appears standing as often as sitting; by this observation, however, he corrects, not Pliny, but his own mistaken imagination.

[12] Georg. Codinus de originib. Constant., edit. Venet. p. 12: Τὴν γῆν λέγουσιν Ἑστίαν, καὶ πλάττουσιν αὐτὴν γυναικα, τύμπανον βαστάζουσαν, ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἀνέμους ἡ γῆ ὑφ' ἑαυτὴν συγκλείει. Suidas, either on Codinus' authority, or perhaps drawing from a common source with him, says the same in his account of the word ἑστία. "The earth is represented under the name of Vesta as a woman carrying a tympanum, in which she is supposed to hold the winds confined." The reason given is somewhat absurd; it would have been more plausible to have said that the tympanum was one of her attributes, because the ancients believed that she resembled it in shape, σχῆμα αὐτῆς τυμπανοειδὲς εἶναι. (Plutarchus de placitis Philos. cap. 10, id. de facie in orbe Lunæ.) Only it is possible enough that Codinus may have been mistaken in the figure,

CHAPTER X.

I GO on to notice an expression of surprise in Spence, which most significantly proves how little reflexion he can have bestowed upon the nature of the limits of Art and Painting.

"As to the muses in general," he says, "it is remarkable that the poets say so little of them in a descriptive way; much less indeed than might be expected for deities to whom they are so particularly indebted." [1]

What does this mean, if not that he feels surprised that, when the poet speaks of the deities, he does not do it in the dumb speech of the painter? Urania, with the poets, is the muse of astronomy; from her name and her performances we at once recognize her office. The artist, in order to render it palpable, represents her pointing with a wand to a globe of the heavens. This wand, this celestial globe, and this posture are, as it were, his letters, from which he leaves us to spell out the name Urania. But when the poet wishes to say that "Urania had long ago foreseen his death in the aspect of the stars"—

"Ipsa diu positis lethum prædixerat astris
Uranie" [2]

—why should he, out of respect to the painter, subjoin, "Urania, wand in hand, and heavenly globe before her"? Would it not be as though a man who could and might speak clearly should still make use of those signs which

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or in the name, or in both. Perhaps he knew no better name to give to what he saw in Vesta's hand than "tympanum," or heard it called a tympanum, and it never struck him that a tympanum could be anything else than the instrument which we call a kettle-drum. Tympana, however, were also a kind of wheel.—

"Hinc radios trivere rotis, hinc tympana plaustris Agricolæ—"

(Virgilius, Georgic ii. 444). The symbol which we see in the hands of the Vesta of Fabretti (ad Tabulam Iliadis, p 334) seems to me to be very like such a wheel, though this scholar takes it for a handmill.

[1] Polymetis, Dial. viii. p 91. [2] Statius, Theb. viii. 551.

the mutes in the seraglios of the Turks, from an inability to articulate, have adopted among themselves?

Spence again expresses the same surprise at the moral beings, or those divinities, to whom the ancients allotted the superintendence of virtues, or whom they supposed to preside over the conduct and events of human life.[3] "It is observable," he says, "that the Roman poets say less of the best of these moral beings than might be expected. The artists are much fuller on this head; and one who would settle what appearances each of them made should go to the medals of the Roman emperors.[4] The poets, in fact, speak of them very often as persons; but of their attributes, their dress, and the rest of their figure they generally say but little."

When the poet personifies abstractions, they are sufficiently characterized by their names and the actions which he represents them as performing.

The artist does not command these means. He is therefore compelled to add to his personified abstractions some emblems by which they may be easily recognised. These emblems, since they are different and have different significations, constitute them allegorical figures

A female form, with a bridle in her hand, another, leaning against a pillar, are, in art, allegorical beings. On the contrary, with the poets, Temperance and Constancy are not allegorical beings, but personified abstractions

The invention of these emblems was forced upon artists by necessity. For thus only can they make it understood what this or that figure is intended to signify. But why should the poet allow that to be forced upon him to which the artists have only been driven by a necessity, in which he himself has no share?

What causes Spence so much surprise deserves to be prescribed, as a general law, to poets They must not convert the necessities of painting into a part of their own wealth. They must not look upon the instruments which art has invented for the sake of following poetry as perfections of which they have any cause to be envious. When an artist clothes an image with symbols, he exalts

[3] Polymetis, Dial. x. p. 137. [4] Ibid. p 134.

a mere statue to a higher being. But if the poet makes use of these artistic decorations, he degrades a higher being into a puppet.

As this rule is confirmed by the practice of the ancients, so is its intentional violation the favourite fault of modern poets. All their imaginary beings appear masqued, and the artists who are most familiar with the details of this masquerade generally understand least of the principal work, viz. how to make their beings act, and act in such a way as to indicate their characters.

Still, among the attributes with which the artists characterize their abstractions, there is a class which is more capable and more deserving of being adopted by the poets I mean those which possess nothing properly allegorical, but are to be considered less as emblems than as instruments, of which the beings to whom they are attributed, should they be called upon to act as real persons, would or could make use. The bridle in the hand of Temperance, the pillar against which Constancy is leaning, are entirely allegorical, and therefore of no use whatever to the poet The scales in the hand of Justice are somewhat less so because the right use of the scales is really a part of justice. But the lyre or flute in the hand of a Muse, the lance in the hand of Mars, the hammer and tongs in the hands of Vulcan, are in reality not symbols, but simply instruments, without which these beings could not produce the results which we ascribe to them. Of this class are those attributes which the ancient poets sometimes introduce in their descriptions, and which, on that account, I might, in contradistinction to the allegorical, term the poetical. The latter signify the thing itself, the former only something similar to it.[5]

[5] In the picture which Horace draws of Necessity, and which is perhaps the richest in attributes that can be found among the poets (Od. i. 35)—

"Te semper anteit sæva Necessitas;
Clavos trabales et cuneos manu
Gestans ahenea; nec severus
Uncus abest liquidumque plumbum,"

whether we take the nails, the clamps, the molten lead, for means of firmly securing or for instruments of punishment, they must

CHAPTER XI.

Count Caylus also appears to desire that the poet should clothe his imaginary beings with allegorical

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alike be considered as belonging to the class of poetical rather than allegorical attributes; yet there are too many of them even when considered as such; and the passage is one of the coldest in Horace. Sanadon says ' J'ose dire que ce tableau, pris dans le détail, serait plus beau sur la toile que dans une ode *héroïque*. Je ne puis souffrir cet attirail patibulaire de clous, de coins, de crocs et de *plomb fondu*. J'ai cru en devoir décharger la *traduction* en substituant les idées générales aux idées singulières. C'est dommage que le Poëte ait eu besoin de ce correctif." Sanadon's feeling was just and refined, but his justification of it is based upon false grounds. The passage is unpleasing, not because the attributes made use of are an "attirail patibulaire" (for he had the option of adopting the other interpretation, and thus changing the instruments of execution into the firmest cements employed in building), but because they are peculiarly addressed to the eyes, and, if we attempt to acquire by the ear conceptions which would be naturally conveyed through the eyes, a greater effort is required, while the ideas themselves are incapable of the same distinctness. The continuation of the above-quoted stanza in Horace, moreover, reminds me of a few mistakes of Spence, which do not create the most favourable impression of the accuracy with which he has weighed the passages he has cited from the ancient poets. He is speaking of the figure under which the Romans worshipped Faith or Honesty (Dial. x. p. 145). "The Romans called her 'Fides'; and when they called her 'Sola Fides,' seem *to* mean the same as we do by the words 'downright honesty.' She is represented with an erect, open air, and with nothing but a thin robe on, so fine that one might see through it. Horace therefore calls her *thin-dressed* in one of his odes; and transparent in another." In this short passage there are not less than three gross mistakes. Firstly, it is false that *sola* was a peculiar epithet applied by the Romans to the goddess Fides. In both the passages of Livy, which he quotes to prove this (lib. i. § 21, lib. ii. § 3), it signifies nothing more than it always signifies, viz. "the exclusion of everything else." In the first passage the *soli* even appears suspicious to the critics, and is supposed to have crept into the text through a fault of transcription occasioned by the *solenne*, which stands next it. In the second quotation Livy is speaking, not of Fides, but of Innocentia. Secondly, it is stated that in one of his odes (viz. the one above mentioned, lib. i. 35) Horace has bestowed upon Fides the epithet "thin-dressed" —

"Te Spes et albo rara Fides colit
Velato panno."

symbols[1] The Count understood painting far better than he did poetry.

It is true that *rarus* does also means thin; but here it simply signifies "rare," i e "what is seldom met with," and is applied to Fides herself, and not to her dress Spence would have been right, had the poet said, "Fides raro velata panno" Thirdly, Horace is said in another passage to call Faith or Integrity "transparent," and to mean the same as when we say (in our professions of fidelity and honesty) "I wish you could see into my breast," or "I wish that you could see through me" This passage is the following line of the eighteenth ode of the first book —

"Arcanique Fides prodiga, pellucidior vitro."

How could any one so suffer himself to be misled by a mere word? Is the *Fides arcani prodiga*, Faithfulness, or is it not rather Faithlessness? It is of this last that Horace speaks as being "as transparent as glass," because she exposes to every gaze the secrets that have been entrusted to her.

[1] Apollo delivers the body of Sarpedon purified and embalmed to Death and Sleep, to carry to his fatherland (Il xvi. 681) :—

Πέμπε δέ μιν πομποῖσιν ἅμα κραιπνοῖσι φέρεσθαι,
Ὕπνῳ καὶ Θανάτῳ διδυμάοσιν

Caylus recommends this idea to the painter, but adds: "Il est fâcheux qu'Homère ne nous ait rien laissé sur les attributs qu'on donnait de son temps au Sommeil; nous ne connaissons, pour caractériser ce Dieu, que son action même, et nous le couronnons de pavots. Ces idées sont modernes, la première est d'un médiocre service, mais elle ne peut être employée dans le cas présent, où même les fleurs me paroissent déplacées, surtout pour une figure qui groupe avec la mort" (Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, de l'Odyssée d'Homère et de l'Eneide de Virgile, avec des observations générales sur le Costume, à Paris, 1757-58) This is requiring of Homer one of those trifling ornaments which are most strongly opposed to the grandeur of his style. The most ingenious attributes he could have bestowed on Sleep would not have characterized him nearly so perfectly, would not have called up in us nearly so lively an idea of him, as does the single trait by which he represents him as the twin brother of Death Let the artist but express this and he may dispense with all attributes The ancient artists have, in fact, represented Death and Sleep with that resemblance between the two which is naturally expected in twins On a chest of cedar wood in the temple of Juno at Elis they were carved as two boys, sleeping in the arms of Night Only the one was white, while the other was black, the one slept, the other appeared to sleep; both had their feet crossed, for I prefer to translate the words of Pausanias (Eliac cap xviii.), *ἀμφοτέρους διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας*, by this rather than by "with crooked feet," or, as Gedoyn has rendered it in his language, "les pieds contrefaits" What expression would crooked feet have here? But to lie with the feet crossed is the

Yet, in the work in which he expresses this desire, I have found occasion for some weightier reflexions, the most important of which I now notice, in order to afford it a maturer consideration.

The artist, according to the Count's view, should make himself more closely acquainted with the greatest of descriptive poets, Homer—that second nature. He shows him what rich and hitherto unemployed materials for the most excellent pictures the story written by the Greek affords, and that the more closely he adheres even to the most trifling circumstances mentioned by the poet the more likely he is to succeed in the execution of his work

In this proposition, the two kinds of imitation which I distinguished above are again confounded. The painter shall not only represent what the poet has represented, but the details of his representation shall be the same. He shall make use of the poet, not only as a relater, but as a poet.

But why is not this second kind of imitation, which is so degrading to a poet, equally so to an artist? If a series of such pictures as Count Caylus has adduced from Homer had existed in the poet's time, and we knew that he had derived his work from them, would he not be immeasurably lowered in our admiration? How then does it happen

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ordinary posture of sleepers, and is exactly the attitude of Sleep in Maffei (Raccol pl 151) Modern artists have entirely abandoned the resemblance which the ancients maintained between Sleep and Death; and it has become their general custom to represent Death as a skeleton, or at the most as a skeleton clothed with skin Caylus's first duty was to advise the artist whether to follow the ancient or modern custom in his representation of Death Yet he appears to declare himself in favour of the modern, since he speaks of Death as a figure, near which another crowned with flowers could not well be grouped. But had he considered how unsuited the modern idea of Death would have been to an Homeric picture? And is it possible that its repulsiveness should not have forced itself upon him? I cannot persuade myself that the little metal figure in the ducal gallery at Florence which represents a skeleton lying on the ground, and resting one of its arms on an urn (Spence's Polymetis, tab xli), is a real antique At any rate it cannot represent Death, because the ancients represented him differently. Even their poets have never drawn him under this repulsive form [Lessing subsequently wrote an essay on this subject, which will be found in this volume, p. 175.—ED]

that we withdraw none of our high esteem from the artist, when he really does nothing more than express the words of the poet in form and colour?

The following seems to be the cause. In the artist's case the execution appears to be more difficult than the invention, in the poet's this is reversed, and execution seems easier to him than invention. If Virgil had borrowed the connexion of Laokoon and his children by the serpent-folds from the group of statuary, the merit which we now esteem the greater and more difficult of attainment in this picture of his would at once fall to the ground, and only the more trifling one be left. For the first creation of this connexion in the imagination is far greater than the expression of it in words. On the contrary, had the artist borrowed this connexion from the poet, he would still have always retained sufficient merit in our eyes, although he would have been entirely deprived of the credit of the invention. For expression in marble is far more difficult than expression in words; and, when we weigh invention and representation against one another, we are always inclined to yield to the master on one side, just as much as we think we have received in excess on the other.

There are even cases where it is a greater merit for artists to have imitated nature through the medium of the imitation of the poet, than without it. The painter who executes a beautiful landscape after the description of a Thomson has done more than he who takes it directly from nature. This latter sees his original before him, while the former must exert his imagination until he believes he has it before him. The latter produces something beautiful from a lively and sensible impression; the former from the indefinite and weak representation of arbitrary signs.

But, as a consequence of this natural readiness in us to dispense with the merit of invention in the artist, there arose on his part an equally natural indifference to it. For, when we saw that invention could not be his strong point, but that his highest merit depended on execution, it became of no importance to him whether his original matter were old or new, used once or a thousand times;

whether it belonged to himself or another. He confined himself, therefore, within the narrow circle of a few subjects, already become familiar to himself and the public, and expended his whole inventive power upon variations of materials already known, upon fresh combinations of old objects. That is in fact the idea which most of the elementary books on painting attach to the word invention; for, although they divide it into the artistic and poetical, the latter does not extend to the production of objects themselves, but is solely confined to arrangement and expression.[2] It is invention, yet not the invention of a whole, but of single parts, and of their position in respect to one another; it is invention, but of that lower kind which Horace recommends to his tragic poet!

> "Tuque
> Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
> Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus."[3]

Recommends, I repeat, not enjoins. Recommends as more easy, convenient, and advantageous, but does not prescribe as better and nobler in itself

In fact, the poet who treats a well-known story or a well-known character, has already made considerable progress towards his object. He can afford to pass over a hundred cold details, which would otherwise be indispensable to the understanding of his whole; and the more quickly his audience comprehends this, the sooner their interest will be awakened. This advantage the painter also enjoys, when his subject is not new to us, and we recognize, at the first glance, the intention and meaning of his whole composition; at once not only see that his characters are speaking, but hear what they are saying. The most important effect depends on the first glance, and, if this involves us in laborious thought and reflexion, our longing to have our feelings roused cools down, and, in order to avenge ourselves on the unintelligible artist, we harden ourselves against the expression, and woe to him if he has sacrificed beauty to expression. We find in that case nothing to induce us to linger before his work.

[2] Betrachtungen u. die Malerei, p. 159.
[3] Ars Poetica, 128.

What we see does not please us; and what to think meanwhile we do not know.

Let us now consider together, firstly, *That invention and novelty in his subjects are far from being the principal things we look for in an artist;* secondly, *That a familiar subject furthers and renders more easy the effect of his art.* And I think that we shall not look, with Count Caylus, for the reasons why the artist so seldom determines upon a new subject, either in his indolence, in his ignorance, or in the difficulty of the mechanical part of his art, which demands all his industry and all his time; but we shall find them more deeply founded, and shall perhaps be inclined to praise as an act of self-restraint, wise, and useful to ourselves, what at first sight appeared limitation of art, and curtailment of our pleasure. I do not fear that experience will contradict me; the painters will thank the Count for his good intentions, but will scarcely make such general use of him as he seems to expect. But even if they should, still in another hundred years a fresh Caylus would be necessary to bring the ancient subjects again into remembrance, and lead back the artist into that field where others before him had already gathered such undying laurels Or do we desire that the public should be as learned as is the connoisseur from his books, that it should be acquainted and familiar with every scene of history and of fable which can yield a beautiful picture? I quite allow that the artists would have done better if, since the time of Raphael, they had made Homer their text-book instead of Ovid. But since it has happened otherwise, let them not attempt to divert the public from its old track, nor surround its enjoyment with greater difficulties than those which enjoyment must have in order to be what it is supposed to be.

Protogenes painted the mother of Aristotle. I do not know how much the philosopher paid him for the portrait. But whether it was instead of payment, or in addition to it, he imparted to him a piece of advice more valuable than the price itself For I cannot imagine that it could have been intended for mere flattery, but believe that it was out of an especial regard to that necessity of art, namely of being intelligible to all, that he counselled

him to paint the exploits of Alexander; exploits with the fame of which, at that time, the whole world was ringing; and which he could well foresee would never be erased from the memory of future generations. But Protogenes had not sufficient steadiness to act upon this advice. "Impetus animi," says Pliny, "et quædam artis libido."[4] Too great a buoyancy of spirits (as it were) in art and a kind of craving after the curious and unknown, impelled him towards an entirely different class of subjects. He chose rather to paint the story of an Ialysus,[5] or a Kydippe; and, in consequence, we can no longer even guess what they represented.

[4] Plinius, xxxv. 36, 20

[5] Richardson mentions this piece, when he wishes to illustrate the rule that in a painting nothing, however excellent in itself, should be allowed to distract the attention of the spectator from the principal figure. "Protogenes," he says, "had introduced a partridge into his famous painting of Ialysus, and had delineated it with so much skill that it seemed to be alive, and was the admiration of all Greece Since, however, he saw that it attracted all eyes, to the prejudice of the main figure in the piece, he completely effaced it" (Traité de la Peinture, t i p. 46) Richardson is mistaken This partridge was not in the Ialysus, but in another painting of Protogenes, which was called the reposing or the idle satyr, Σάτυρος ἀναπαυόμενος. I should scarcely have noticed this error, which has arisen from a passage of Pliny being misunderstood, had not I found the same mistake in Meursius "In eadem tabula, scilicet in qua Ialysus, Satyrus erat, quem dicebant Anapauomenon, tibias tenens" (Rhodi, lib i cap xiv p. 38) Something of the kind is found in Winckelmann also (On the Imitation of the Greek pieces in Painting and Sculpture, p 56). Strabo is the only authority on which this story of the partridge rests, and he expressly distinguishes between the picture of Ialysus and that of the satyr leaning against a pillar, upon which the partridge sat (lib. xiv. p 750, edit Xyl) Meursius, Richardson, and Winckelmann have all misunderstood the passage of Pliny (lib xxxv. § 36), because they paid no attention to the fact that two distinct pictures are spoken of, one, on account of which Demetrius did not conquer a town because he would not assault the place where it was, another which Protogenes painted during this siege. The first was the Ialysus, the second the satyr.

CHAPTER XII.

HOMER elaborates two kinds of beings and actions, visible and invisible. This distinction cannot be indicated by painting: in it everything is visible, and visible in but one way.

When, therefore, Count Caylus continues the pictures of invisible actions in an unbroken series with those of the visible; and when, in pictures of mixed actions, in which both visible and invisible beings take part, he does not, and perhaps cannot, specify how these last (which we only who are contemplating the picture ought to see in it) are to be introduced, so that the persons in the painting itself should not see them, or at least should not appear as if they necessarily did so—when, I say, Caylus does this, the whole series, as well as many single pieces, necessarily becomes in the highest degree confused, incomprehensible, and contradictory.

Still, ultimately, it would be possible, with book in hand, to remedy this fault: only the worst of it is this: when painting wipes away the distinction between visible and invisible beings, it at the same time destroys all those characteristic traits by which the latter and higher order is elevated above the former and lower.

For instance, when the gods, after disputing over the destiny of the Trojans, at length appeal to arms, the whole of this contest, according to the poet,[1] is waged invisibly; and this invisibility permits the imagination to magnify the scene, and allows it free scope to fancy the persons and actions of the gods, as great and as far exalted above those of ordinary humanity as ever it will. But painting must adopt a visible scene, the various necessary parts of which become the standard for the persons who take part in it: this standard the eye has ready at hand, and by its want of proportion to the higher beings, these last, which in the poet were great, upon the artist's canvas become monsters.

Minerva, against whom, in this contest, Mars assays

[1] Iliad, xxi 385.

the first assault, steps backwards, and, with mighty hand, seizes from the ground a large, black, rough stone, which in olden times the united hands of men had rolled there for a landmark.—Iliad, xxi 403.

ἡ δ' ἀναχασσαμένη λίθον εἵλετο χειρὶ παχείῃ,
κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ, μέλανα, τρηχύν τε, μέγαν τε,
τόν ῥ' ἄνδρες πρότεροι θέσαν, ἔμμεναι οὖρον ἀρούρης.

In order fully to realize the size of this stone, we must recollect that, though Homer describes his heroes as being as strong again as the strongest men of his own time, he tells us that even they were still further surpassed by the men whom Nestor had known in his youth Now, I ask, if Minerva hurls a stone which no single man, even of the younger days of Nestor, could set up for a landmark—if, I ask, Minerva hurls such a stone as this at Mars, of what stature ought the goddess herself to be represented? If her stature is proportioned to the size of the stone, the marvellous disappears at once. A man who is three times the size that I am naturally can hurl a stone three times as great as I can. On the other hand, should the stature of the goddess not be proportionate to the size of the stone, there arises in the painting an evident improbability, the offensiveness of which will not be removed by the cold reflexion that a goddess must be possessed of superhuman strength. Where I see a greater effect, there I expect to see more powerful causes

And Mars, overthrown by this mighty stone—

ἑπτὰ δ' ἐπέσχε πέλεθρα,

covered seven hides It is impossible for the painter to invest the god with this extraordinary size; but, if he does not, then it is not Mars who is lying on the ground, at least, not the Mars of Homer, but a common warrior [2]

[2] Quintus Calaber in his 12th book (vv 158–185) has imitated this invisible contest of the gods with the manifest intention of improving upon his model The grammarian, for instance, seems to have found it unseemly that a god should be struck to the ground with a stone. Accordingly, though he represents the gods as hurling against one another great masses of rock, torn from Mount Ida, these rocks are

Longinus says that he often felt that Homer appeared to raise his men to gods, and reduce his gods to men. Painting effects this reduction. In it everything that in the poet raises the gods above god-like men utterly vanishes. The strength, size, and swiftness, of which Homer always bestowed upon his deities a much higher and more extraordinary degree than he attributes to his most eminent heroes,[3] must sink, in the painting, to the

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shivered against the limbs of the gods, and scattered, as sand, around them.

> . . . . . . οἱ δὲ κολώνας
> χερσὶν ἀπορρήξαντες ἀπ' οὔδεος 'Ιδαίοιο
> βάλλον ἐπ' ἀλλήλους· αἱ δὲ ψαμάθοισι ὅμοιαι
> ῥεῖα διεσκίδναντο θεῶν περὶ δ' ἄσχετα γυῖα
> ῥηγνύμενα διὰ τύτθα . . .

An artificial refinement, which is the destruction of the main subject It heightens our conceptions of the bodies of the gods, but makes the weapons which they employ against one another ridiculous If gods hurl stones at one another, these stones must be capable of injuring the gods, or we appear to see a troop of mischievous boys pelting one another with lumps of earth Here, therefore, as ever, old Homer proves the wisest, and all the censure with which cold critics have assailed him, all the rivalry in which lesser geniuses have engaged with him, serve only to set his wisdom in its happiest light Meanwhile I do not deny that Quintus's description contains some excellent and original features, but they are such as become the stormy fire of a modern poet rather than the modest greatness of Homer. The cry of the gods, for instance, the sound of which ascends to the heights of heaven, and pierces to the lowest depths of the earth, which shakes vehemently the mountain, and the town, and the fleet, but is not heard of man, seems to me a very significant stroke. The cry was so loud that the diminutive organs of human hearing were incapable of receiving it

[3] No one who has even cursorily read Homer will question this assertion as far as regards strength and speed. It may be, however, that the reader will not recollect at once the examples from which it is clear that the poet also attributed to his divinities a size of body which far surpasses all human dimensions The proofs I bring of this (in addition to the passage, quoted above, where Mars is described as covering seven hides of land) are the helmet of Minerva—

(κυνέην . . ἑκατὸν πόλεων πρυλέεσσ' ἀραρυῖαν, Iliad, v. 744)

—which was large enough to cover as many troops as a hundred cities could bring into the field; the stride of Neptune (Iliad, xiii 20), and the passage, in the description of the shield, which I consider the

common level of humanity, and Jupiter and Agamemnon, Apollo and Achilles, Ajax and Mars, become exactly the same beings, and can be recognized by nothing but their outward conventional symbols.

The means used by painters of giving us to understand that this or that object in their compositions must be considered as invisible is a thin cloud, with which they surround it on the side that is turned towards the other persons in the scene. This cloud appears to be borrowed from Homer For if, in the tumult of the fight, one of the more important heroes falls into a danger from which none but divine power can save him, the poet represents him as being enveloped by the rescuing divinity in a thick cloud, or in night, and so carried off—as Paris is by Venus,[4] Idaeus by Neptune,[5] and Hector by Apollo.[6] And Caylus, when he designs paintings of such occurrences, never fails to recommend to the artist the introduction of this mist and cloud. Yet surely it is manifest to all that in the poet concealment in mist and

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most conclusive proof all, where Mars and Minerva head the troops of the beleaguered town (Iliad, xviii. 516) —

. . . Ἦρχε δ' ἄρα σφιν Ἄρης καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη,
ἄμφω χρυσείω, χρύσεια δὲ εἵματα ἕσθην,
καλὼ καὶ μεγάλω σὺν τεύχεσιν, ὥς τε θεώ περ,
ἀμφὶς ἀριζήλω· λαοὶ δ' ὑπολίζονες ἦσαν·

Even the commentators on Homer, ancient as well as modern, have not been sufficiently careful to bear in mind the extraordinary dimensions here attributed to the gods, as may be gathered from the modifications which they seem to feel they are bound to introduce into their remarks upon the size of Minerva's helmet (v. the notes on the above-quoted passage in the edition of Clarke and Ernesti) But the loss of the sublime which we incur by never thinking of the Homeric deities except as the beings of ordinary size which they are generally represented on canvas, is beyond all computation Painting, it is true, cannot be allowed to represent the gods as of this extraordinary size, but sculpture may in a certain measure, and I am convinced that the ancient masters are indebted to Homer both for the forms of their gods generally, and also for that colossal size which they sometimes bestow upon them in their statues (Herodot lib. ii. p 130, edit. Wessel) I reserve for another place some especial remarks upon the colossal, as well as the reasons I assign for its producing so powerful an effect in sculpture, but none at all in painting

[4] Iliad, iii 381.

[5] [Or rather, by Vulcan.—ED] see Iliad, v 23.

[6] Ibid. xx. 444

night is nothing more than a poetical expression for rendering invisible. I have always, therefore, been astonished to find this poetical expression realized, and an actual cloud introduced into the painting, behind which, as behind a Spanish cloak, the hero stands concealed from his enemy. Such was not the intention of the poet. It is stepping beyond the limits of painting. For the cloud is here a real hieroglyphic, a mere symbolical token, which does not make the rescued hero invisible, but says to the beholders, You must represent him to yourself as invisible. It is here no better than the labels with inscriptions which are placed in the mouths of the figures in old Gothic paintings.

It is true that when Hector is being carried off by Apollo, Homer represents Achilles as making three thrusts with his lance into the thick mist at him—τρὶς δ' ἠέρα τύψε βαθεῖαν.[7] But in the language of the poet this means nothing more than that Achilles had become so furious that he made three thrusts with his lance before he perceived that his enemy was no longer in his presence. Achilles saw no actual mist; and the power which the gods possessed of rendering the objects of their protection invisible lay not in a mist, but in the rapidity with which they bore them away. But in order to express, at the same time, that this abduction was performed with such celerity that no human eye could follow the body so disappearing, the poet previously conceals it in a mist. Not that a mist appeared in the place of the body which had been carried off, but because we think of what is enveloped in a mist as invisible. Accordingly, Homer sometimes inverts the case, and, instead of describing the object as rendered invisible, makes the subject struck with blindness Thus Neptune darkens the eyes of Achilles when he rescues Æneas from his murderous hand, and, snatching him out of the midst of the melée, places him at once in the rear[8] In fact, however, the eyes of Achilles are here no more blinded than, in the former passage, the rescued heroes were concealed in a cloud. But in both cases the poet has made these

[7] Iliad, xx. 446. [8] *Ibid* 321.

additions in order to render more palpable to our senses that extreme swiftness of disappearance which we call vanishing.

But painters have appropriated the Homeric mist, not only in those cases where Homer has himself used it, viz. when persons become invisible, or disappear; but also in all those where it is intended that the spectator should be able to perceive, in a painting, anything which the characters themselves, either all or part of them, cannot see. Minerva was visible to Achilles alone when she prevented him from coming to actual blows with Agamemnon. I know no other way, says Caylus, to express this than by concealing her, on the side nearest to the rest of the council, by a cloud. This is in complete opposition to the spirit of the poet. Invisibility is the natural condition of his divinities. There was needed no dazzling to render them invisible—no cutting off of the ordinary beams of light,[9] while, on the contrary, to render them visible, an enlightenment and enlargement

[9] It is true that Homer makes also divinities conceal themselves now and then in a cloud, but it is only when they wish to escape the observation of their fellow-deities; e.g. Iliad, xiv. 282, where Juno and Sleep, ἠέρα ἑσσαμένω, go together to Mount Ida, the cunning goddess had every reason for concealing herself from Venus, who had lent her her girdle only on the pretext of making a very different expedition. In the same book (v 343) a golden cloud is required for the concealment of the love-intoxicated Jupiter and his spouse, to overcome her chaste reluctance

πῶς κ' ἔοι, εἴ τις νῶϊ θεῶν αἰειγενετάων
εὕδοντ' ἀθρήσειε; . . . .

Juno was not afraid of being seen by men but by gods. And because Homer, some lines after, makes Jupiter say—

Ἥρη, μήτε θεῶν τόγε δείδιθι, μήτε τιν' ἀνδρῶν,
ὄψεσθαι· τοῖόν τοι ἐγὼ νέφος ἀμφικαλύψω
χρύσεον

—it does not follow that this cloud would have been required just to conceal them from the eyes of men. All he meant to say was, that, protected by it, his wife would be as invisible to the eyes of the gods as she always was to those of men. So also when Minerva puts Pluto's helmet upon her head (Iliad, v 845), which had the same effect as enveloping herself in a cloud, she does it, not that she may be hidden from the Trojans, who either did not behold her at all or saw her under the form of Sthenelus, but simply that she may not be recognized by Mars

of mortal vision was required. Thus it is not enough that in painting the cloud is an arbitrary and not a natural sign; this arbitrary symbol has not even the single, definite meaning which, as such, it could have; for it is used indiscriminately, either to represent the visible as invisible, or the invisible as visible.

CHAPTER XIII.

If Homer's works were entirely lost, and nothing remained to us of the Iliad and Odyssey but a series of paintings from them similar to those of which Caylus has sketched the outlines, should we be able, from these pictures—and they must be from the hand of the most accomplished master—to form the idea we now possess, I do not say, of the whole poet, but merely of his descriptive talent?

Let us put it to the test with the first piece we chance upon. Suppose it is the painting of the plague.[1] What do we see upon the artist's canvas? Dead corpses, burning funeral piles, the dying busied with the dead, while the angered god is seated upon a cloud, discharging his arrows. The greatest richness of this painting is poverty in the poet. For, if we were to restore Homer from it, what could we make him say? "Hereupon Apollo grew angry, and shot his arrows among the army of the Greeks. Many Greeks died, and their bodies were consumed." Now let us read Homer himself:—

βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων χωόμενος κῆρ,
τόξ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων, ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτρην.
ἔκλαγξάν δ' ἄρ' ὀιστοὶ ἐπ' ὤμων χωομένοιο,
αὐτοῦ κινηθέντος. ὁ δ' ἤιε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς
ἕζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν, μετὰ δ' ἰὸν ἕηκεν·
δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο.
οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπῴχετο, καὶ κύνας ἀργούς·
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἐχεπευκὲς ἐφιείς
βάλλ'· αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμειαί.

The poet is as far above the painter as life is above

[1] Iliad, i. 44–53 Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, p. 70.

the painting. Angered, armed with bow and quiver, Apollo descends from the peaks of Olympus. I not only see him coming down, I hear him. At every step of the indignant god the arrows rattle upon his shoulders. He strides on, like the night; now he sits over against the ships, and lets fly—fearfully clangs the silver bow—his first arrow at the mules and the hounds. Next, with his more poisonous dart, he strikes the men themselves; and the funeral piles with their dead are everywhere ceaselessly blazing. The musical picture, which the words of the poet at the same time present, cannot be translated into another language. It is equally impossible even to guess it from the material painting, although this is the least superiority which the poetical description has over the latter. The principal one is this, that the poet conducts us to his last scene, the only part of his description which the material painting exhibits, through a whole gallery of pictures.

But perhaps the plague is not an advantageous subject for painting. Here is another, which possesses a greater charm for the eyes—the gods in council drinking.[2] An open, golden palace; arbitrary groups of the most beautiful and adorable forms, cup in hand, unto whom Hebe, eternal youth, is ministering. What architecture, what masses of light and shade, what contrasts, what variety of expression! Where am I to begin, and where to cease, feasting my eyes? If the painter thus charms me, how much more will the poet? I open him, and I find—myself deceived. I find four good but simple verses, which might serve very well for a motto beneath a painting, but which, though they contain the materials for a picture, are no picture themselves.

Οἱ δὲ θεοὶ πὰρ Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ἠγορόωντο
χρυσέῳ ἐν δαπέδῳ μετὰ δέ σφισι πότνια Ἥβη
νέκταρ ἐῳνοχόει τοὶ δὲ χρυσέοις δεπάεσσιν
δειδέχατ' ἀλλήλους, Τρώων πόλιν εἰσορόωντες·

An Apollonius, or a still more indifferent poet, could have said this as well; and Homer here remains as far below the artist as the artist fell short of him.

[2] Iliad, iv. 1–4. Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, p. 30.

But, except in these four lines, Caylus cannot find a single picture in the whole fourth book of the Iliad. "However greatly," says he, "the fourth book is distinguished by the numerous exhortations to the combat, by the abundance of brilliant and strongly marked characters, and by the art with which the poet brings before us the multitude which he is about to set in motion, yet it is quite useless for the purposes of the artist." He might have added, "However rich it is in everything, that is held to constitute a poetical picture." Such pictures, in reality, occur in greater frequency and perfection throughout the fourth book than in any other. Where is to be found a more elaborate or a more illusive description than that of Pandarus, when, at the instigation of Minerva, he violates the truce, and discharges his arrow at Menelaus? Than that of the advance of the Grecian army? Than that of the mutual charge? Than that of the deed of Ulysses, by which he takes vengeance for the death of his friend Leucus?

But what conclusion is to be drawn from this; that not a few of the most beautiful descriptions of Homer furnish no picture for the artist? that the artist can derive pictures from him, where he himself has none? that those which he has, and the artist can use, would be but meagre descriptions if they showed us no more than the artist does? what else but a negative answer to the question I asked above? that from material paintings, of which the poems of Homer furnish the subjects, even though they were ever so numerous, or ever so excellent, we can come to no decision upon the descriptive talents of the poet.

CHAPTER XIV.

But if this be the case, and if a poem may be very productive of pictures, and still not be descriptive itself, while, on the contrary, another may be highly descriptive and yet yield little to the artist, there is an end of the theory of Count Caylus, which would make usefulness to the painter the touchstone of poets, and allot them

their rank according to the number of pictures which they offer the artist.[1]

Far be it from us, even by our silence, to suffer this theory to obtain the appearance of an established law. Milton would be the first to fall an innocent victim to it. For it appears that the contemptuous judgment which Caylus expresses of him should really be considered less as the national taste than as a consequence of his assumed rule. The loss of sight, he says, is probably the strongest point of similarity between Milton and Homer. It is true Milton cannot fill picture-galleries. But if the sphere of my bodily eyes, so long as I enjoy them, must needs also be that of my inner eye, I would consider the loss of them a gain indeed, inasmuch I should thereby be freed from this limitation.

"Paradise Lost" is not less the first epic after Homer because it offers but few subjects for painting, than the history of the Passion of Christ becomes a poem because we can scarcely set the point of a pin upon it without lighting on some passage which has called forth the exertions of a number of the greatest masters. The Evangelists recount the fact with the driest possible simplicity, and the artist makes use of its numerous parts without their having shown, on their side, the slightest spark of artistic genius in relating it. There are facts picturable and unpicturable, and the historian can narrate the most picturable as unpicturesquely as the poet has the power of setting forth picturesquely the most unpicturable.

To believe it to be otherwise is to suffer ourselves to be misled by the twofold meaning of a word. A poetical picture is not necessarily convertible into a material picture; but every feature, every combination of several features, by which the poet makes his object so palpable

[1] Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, Avert. p. v.: "On est toujours convenu, que plus un poeme fournissait d'images et d'actions, plus il avait de supériorité en Poesie. Cette réflexion m'avait conduit a penser que le calcul des différents Tableaux, qu'offrent les Poemes, pouvait servir à comparer le mérite respectif des Poemes et des Poetes. Le nombre et le genre des Tableaux que présentent ces grands ouvrages, auraient été une espèce de pierre de touche, ou plutôt une balance certaine du mérite de ces poemes et du génie de leurs auteurs."

to us, that we become more conscious of this object than of his words, is picturesque, is a picture, because it brings us nearer to that degree of illusion of which the material picture is especially capable, and which is most quickly and easily called forth by the contemplation of the material picture.[2]

CHAPTER XV.

Now the poet, as experience shows, can raise this degree of illusion in us by the representation of other than visible objects. Consequently artists must necessarily renounce whole classes of pictures which the poet has at his command. Dryden's "Song for St. Cecilia's Day" is full of musical pictures which afford no employment for the brush; but I will not further digress with such instances, from which we can only learn at best that colours are not sounds, and ears not eyes.

I will still keep to the pictures of merely visible objects, for these are common to artist and poet. Why is it that many poetical descriptions of this kind are useless to the artist, and, on the contrary, many actual paintings, when treated by a poet, lose the principal part of their effect?

Examples may serve to guide me. I repeat the picture of Pandarus, in the fourth book of the Iliad, is one of the most minute and illusive in the whole of Homer. From the grasping of the bow to the flight of the arrow every moment is painted; and all these momentary periods follow

[2] What we call poetical pictures were, as the reader of Longinus will recollect, called *phantasiæ* by the ancients. And what we call illusion, viz. that part of those pictures which produces deception, was by them named *enargia*. For this reason it was said by some one, as Plutarch mentions (Erot. t. ii. p. 1351, edit. Henr. Steph.), that poetical *phantasiæ* were, on account of their *enargia*, dreams of a waking person—*Αἱ ποιητικαὶ φαντασίαι διὰ τὴν ἐνάργειαν ἐγρηγορότων ἐνύπνιά εἰσιν.* I much wish that modern treatises on poetry had made use of this nomenclature, and had entirely abstained from employing the word picture. We should thus have been spared a number of half-true rules, which principally rest upon the identity of an arbitrary term. Poetical *phantasiæ* would not have been so readily confined within the limits of a material painting, but as soon as *phantasiæ* were called *poetical pictures*, the foundation of the error was laid.

what precedes and what follows can be most easily gathered.

In like manner, poetry, in its progessive imitations, is confined to the use of a single property of bodies, and must therefore choose that which calls up the most sensible image of the body in the aspect in which she makes use of it.

From this flows the rule as to the unity of descriptive epithets and moderation in the depiction of bodily objects.

I should put but little confidence in this dry chain of reasoning did I not find it completely confirmed by the practice of Homer, or rather had it not been the practice of Homer himself which led me to it. It is only on these principles that the sublime style of the Greek poet can be determined and explained, and at the same time a due value assigned to the directly opposite style of so many modern poets who have endeavoured to rival the painter in a department in which he must necessarily vanquish them.

I find that Homer describes nothing but progressive actions, and that when he paints bodies and single objects he does it only as contributory to such, and then generally only by a single touch. It is no wonder, then, that where Homer paints, the artist finds least to employ his pencil, and that his harvest is only to be found where the story assembles a number of beautiful bodies in beautiful attitudes, and in a space advantageous to art, however little the poet himself may depict these forms, these attitudes, and this space. If we go through the whole series of paintings, as Caylus proposes them, piece by piece, we shall find in each a proof of this remark

I here quit the Count, who would make the palette of the artist the touchstone of the poet, in order to explain the style of Homer more closely.

For one thing, I say that Homer has generally but a single characteristic, a ship is for him now the black ship, now the hollow ship, now the swift ship, at most the well-rowed black ship Farther than this he does not enter into any description of the ship. But of the sailing, the setting out, and hauling up of the ship he draws a detailed picture enough, of which, if the artist

wished to transfer the whole of it to his canvas, he would be compelled to make five or six different paintings

If, indeed, special circumstances compel Homer to fix our attention longer upon a single object, he nevertheless makes no picture which could be an object of imitation to an artist; but by innumerable devices he contrives to set before our eyes a single object, as it would appear at distinct and successive instants, in each of which it is in a different stage, and in the last of which the artist must await the poet, in order to show us complete that which we have seen the poet forming. For instance, when Homer wants to show us the chariot of Juno, Hebe puts it together, piece by piece, before our eyes. We see the wheels, the axle, the seat, the pole, the traces and straps, not as they are when all fitted together, but rather as they are being put together under the hands of Hebe. Of the wheel alone does the poet give us more than a single feature; there he points out, one by one, the eight bronze spokes, the golden felloes the tires of bronze, and the silver naves. One might almost say that, because there was more than one wheel, he felt bound to spend as much more time in their description as putting them on separately would have taken in reality.[1]

Ἥβη δ᾽ ἀμφ᾽ ὀχέεσσι θοῶς βάλε καμπύλα κύκλα,
χάλκεα ὀκτάκνημα, σιδηρέῳ ἄξονι ἀμφίς·
τῶν ἤτοι χρυσέη ἴτυς ἄφθιτος, αὐτὰρ ὕπερθεν
χάλκε᾽ ἐπίσσωτρα, προσαρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.
πλῆμναι δ᾽ ἀργύρου εἰσὶ περίδρομοι ἀμφοτέρωθεν.
δίφρος δὲ χρυσέοισι καὶ ἀργυρέοισιν ἱμᾶσιν
ἐντέταται· δοιαὶ δὲ περίδρομοι ἄντυγές εἰσιν·
τοῦ δ᾽ ἐξ ἀργύρεος ῥυμὸς πέλεν αὐτὰρ ἐπ᾽ ἄκρῳ
δῆσε χρύσειον καλὸν ζυγόν, ἐν δὲ λέπαδνα
κάλ᾽ ἔβαλε, χρύσεια.

Again, when Homer would show us how Agamemnon was clad, the king dons each article of his dress, separately, in our presence; his soft under-coat, his great mantle, his beautiful half-boots, and his sword. Now he is ready, and grasps his sceptre. We see the garments

[1] Iliad, v. 722.

whilst the poet is describing the operation of putting them on, but another would have described the robes themselves, down to the smallest fringe, and we should have seen nothing whatever of the action.[2]

μαλακὸν δ' ἔνδυνε χιτῶνα,
καλόν, νηγάτεον, περὶ δὲ μέγα βάλλετο φᾶρος.
ποσσὶ δ' ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσιν ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα·
ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετο ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον,
εἵλετο δὲ σκῆπτρον πατρώιον, ἄφθιτον αἰεί.

This sceptre is here styled "the paternal," "the imperishable," as elsewhere one like it is described merely as *χρυσέοις ἥλοισι πεπαρμένον*, "golden-studded." But when a closer and more complete picture of this important sceptre is required, what does Homer do then? In addition to the golden studs, does he describe the wood and the carved head? He might have done so if he had intended to draw an heraldic description, from which, in after-times, another sceptre exactly like it could be made. And I am sure that many a modern poet would have given us such a description in the king-of-arms style, believing in the simplicity of his heart that he himself had painted the sceptre, because he had supplied the artist with the materials for so doing. But what does Homer care how far he leaves the painter in his rear? Instead of the appearance he gives us the history of the sceptre, first, it is being formed by the labour of Vulcan, next, it glitters in the hands of Jupiter, now it betokens the dignity of Mercury; now it is the martial wand of the warlike Pelops, now the shepherd's staff of the peaceful Atreus.[3]

σκῆπτρον, . . . τὸ μὲν Ἥφαιστος κάμε τεύχων
Ἥφαιστος μὲν ἔδωκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι.
αὐτὰρ ἄρα Ζεὺς δῶκε διακτόρῳ Ἀργειφόντῃ·
Ἑρμείας δὲ ἄναξ δῶκεν Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ,
αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Πέλοψ δῶκ' Ἀτρέι, ποιμένι λαῶν·
Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνήσκων ἔλιπεν πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ
αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Θυέστ' Ἀγαμέμνονι λεῖπε φορῆναι,
πολλῇσιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἄργει παντὶ ἀνάσσειν.

[2] Iliad, ii. 42. [3] *Ibid.* ii. 101

Now I am better acquainted with this sceptre than if a painter were to place it before my eyes or a second Vulcan give it into my hands. I should not be surprised to find that one of the old commentators of Homer had admired this passage as the most perfect allegory of the origin, progress, establishment, and final hereditary succession of kingly power among men. I should indeed smile if I read that Vulcan, who made the sceptre, represented fire, which is indispensable to man's support, and that alleviation of his wants generally which persuaded the men of early times to submit themselves to the authority of an individual; that the first king, a son of Time (Ζεὺς Κρονίων), was a venerable patriarch, who was willing to share his power with a man remarkable for his eloquence and ability, with a Hermes (Διακτόρῳ Ἀργειφόντῃ), or to deliver it over entirely to him; that in course of time the clever orator, as the young state was threatened by foreign enemies, resigned his power into the hands of the bravest warrior (Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ); that the brave warrior, after he had exterminated his foes and assured the safety of the kingdom, artfully contrived to establish his son in his place; who, as a peace-loving ruler, and benevolent shepherd of his people (ποιμὴν λαῶν), first rendered them familiar with a life of pleasure and superfluity; at his death, therefore, the way was paved for the richest of his connexions (πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ) to acquire by gifts and bribery, and afterwards secure to his family, as a purchased possession, that power which hitherto confidence only had bestowed, and merit had esteemed a burden rather than a dignity. I should smile, but nevertheless I should be strengthened in my esteem for the poet to whom so much meaning could be lent. All this, however, is a digression from my subject; and I merely view the history of the sceptre as a device of art by which the poet causes us to linger over a single object, without entering into a cold description of its parts. Even when Achilles swears by his sceptre to revenge the neglect with which Agamemnon has treated him, Homer gives us the history of this sceptre. We see it putting forth leaves upon the hill, the steel divides it from the stem, strips it of

its leaves and bark, and renders it fit to serve the judges of the people, as an emblem of their godlike dignity.[4]

ναὶ μὰ τόδε σκῆπτρον, τὸ μὲν οὔποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄζους
φύσει, ἐπειδὴ πρῶτα τομὴν ἐν ὄρεσσι λέλοιπεν,
οὐδ' ἀναθηλήσει· περὶ γάρ ῥά ἑ χαλκὸς ἔλεψεν
φύλλα τε καὶ φλοιόν· νῦν αὖτέ μεν υἷες 'Αχαιῶν
ἐν παλάμῃς φορέουσι δικασπόλοι, οἵ τε θέμιστας
πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύαται.

It was not so much Homer's desire to describe two sceptres of different material and shape as to convey to our minds a clear and comprehensive image of that difference of power of which they were the emblems—the one the work of Vulcan, the other cut by some unknown hand upon the hill, the one an ancient possession of a noble house, the other destined for the hand of any to whom it might chance to fall; the one extended by a monarch over many isles and the whole of Argos, the other borne by one from the midst of the Greeks, to whom, with others, the maintenance of the laws had been entrusted. This was the real difference which existed between Agamemnon and Achilles. and which Achilles, in spite of all his blind rage, could not but confess.

But it is not only where he combines such further aims with his descriptions that Homer disperses the picture of the object over a kind of history of it; he follows the same course, where the picture itself is the only end in view, in order that its parts, which, naturally, are seen beside each other, may, by following upon one another, be seen as naturally in his description, and, as it were, keep pace with the progress of the narrative; *e.g.* he wishes to paint us the bow of Pandarus; a bow of horn, of such and such a length, well polished, and tipped with gold at either end. What does he? Enumerate all these dry details one after the other? Not at all: that might be called a specification or description of such a bow, but could never be called painting it. He begins with the chase of the wild goat out of whose horns the bow was made. Pandarus

[4] Iliad, i. 234.

himself had laid in wait for and killed it among the rocks; its horns were of an extraordinary size, and for that reason were destined by him to be turned into a bow. Then comes their manufacture, the craftsman joins them, polishes them, and tips them. And thus, as I said before, in the poet we see the making of that which, in the artist, we only see as made [5]

τόξον εὔξοον ἰξάλου αἰγὸς
ἀγρίου, ὅν ῥά ποτ' αὐτὸς ὑπὸ στέρνοιο τυχήσας,
πέτρης ἐκβαίνοντα, δεδεγμένος ἐν προδοκῇσιν
βεβλήκει πρὸς στῆθος· ὁ δ' ὕπτιος ἔμπεσε πέτρῃ·
τοῦ κέρα ἐκ κεφαλῆς ἑκκαιδεκάδωρα πεφύκει·
καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀσκήσας κεραοξόος ἤραρε τέκτων,
πᾶν δ' εὖ λειήνας, χρυσέην ἐπέθηκε κορώνην.

I should never come to an end if I were to transcribe all the examples of this kind. They will occur, without number, to every one who is familiar with Homer.

CHAPTER XVII.

BUT, it will be answered, symbols of poetry are not merely progressive, but are also arbitrary, and, as arbitrary symbols, are certainly capable of representing bodies as they exist in space. Examples of this might be cited from Homer himself, whose shield of Achilles one need only call to mind in order to have the most decisive instance how comprehensively, and yet poetically, a single object may be described by its parts placed in juxtaposition.

I will reply to this twofold objection. I call it twofold because a justly drawn conclusion must stand even without an example; and, on the other hand, an example of Homer would be of great weight with me, even if I did not know any argument by which to justify it

It is true that, since the symbols of speech are arbitrary, it is quite possible that by it the parts of a body may be made to follow upon one another just as easily as they

[5] Iliad iv 105.

stand side by side in nature. But this is a peculiarity of language and its signs generally, and not in so far forth as they are most adapted to the aim of poetry. The poet does not merely wish to be intelligible, the prose writer is contented with simply rendering his descriptions clear and distinct, but not the poet He must awaken in us conceptions so lively, that, from the rapidity with which they arise, the same impression should be made upon our senses which the sight of the material objects that these conceptions represent would produce. In this moment of illusion we should cease to be conscious of the instruments—his words—by which this effect is obtained This was the source of the explanation of poetical painting which we have given. But a poet should always produce a picture; and we will now proceed to inquire how far bodies, according to their parts in juxtaposition, are adapted for this painting.

How do we attain to a distinct conception of an object in space? First, we look at its parts singly, then at their combination, and, lastly, at the whole. The different operations are performed by our senses with such astonishing rapidity that they appear to us to be but one; and this rapidity is indispensable, if we are to form an idea of the whole, which is nothing more than the resultant of the ideas of the parts and of their combination. Supposing, therefore, that the poet could lead us, in the most beautiful order, from one part of the object to another, supposing that he knew how to make the combination of these parts ever so clear to us; still, how much time would be spent in the process? What the eye takes in at a glance he enumerates slowly and by degrees, and it often happens that we have already forgotten the first traits before we come to the last, yet from these traits we are to form our idea of the whole. To the eye the parts once seen are continually present; it can run over them time after time, while the ear, on the contrary, entirely loses those parts it has heard, if they are not retained in the memory. And even if they are thus retained, what trouble and effort it costs us to renew their whole impression in the same order, and with the same liveliness; to pass them at one time under review with but moderate

rapidity, in order to attain any possible idea of the whole!

I will illustrate this position by an example, which may be called a masterpiece of its kind.[1]

"There towers the noble gentian's lofty head
 Far o'er the common herd of vulgar plants,
A whole flower people 'neath his flag is led,
 E'en his blue brother bends and fealty grants.
In circled rays his flowers of golden sheen
 Tower on the stem, and crown its vestment grey;
His glossy leaves of white bestreak'd with green
 Gleam with the watery diamond's varied ray.
O law most just! that Might consort with Grace,
In body fair a fairer soul has place.

Here, like grey mist, a humble earth-plant steals,
 Its leaf by Nature like a cross disposed;
The lovely flower two gilded bills reveals,
 Borne by a bird of amethyst composed.
There finger-shaped a glancing leaf endues
 A crystal stream with its reflexion green:
The flower's soft snow, stain'd with faint purple hues,
 Clasps a striped star its blanchèd rays within.
On trodden heath the rose and emerald bloom,
And craggy hills a purple robe assume."

These are herbs and flowers, which the learned poet describes with great art, and faithfulness to nature; paints, but paints without illusion. I will not say that any one who had never seen these herbs and flowers could form little better than no conception of them therefrom; it may be that all poetical descriptions require a previous acquaintance with their object, nor will I deny that, if any one has the advantage of such acquaintance, the poet might awaken in him a more lively idea of some of the parts I only ask him what is the case with respect to the conception of the whole? If this also is to be vivid, no individual prominence must be given to

[1] See Von Haller's 'Alpen.'

single parts, but the higher light must seem distributed to all alike, and our imagination must have the power of running over all with the same speed, that it may at once construct from them that which can be at once seen in nature Is this the case here? And if it is not, how can it have been said that "the most faithful delineation of a painter would prove weak and dull in comparison with this poetical description"?[2] It is far below the expression of which lines and colours upon a surface are capable, and the critic who bestowed this exaggerated praise upon it must have contemplated it from an entirely false point of view; he must have looked to the foreign ornaments which the poet has interwoven with it, to its elevation above vegetable life, and to the development of those inner perfections for which external beauty serves merely as the shell, more than to this beauty itself, and the degree of liveliness and faithfulness in the representation of it which the painter and poet can respectively preserve. Yet it is the latter only with which we have any concern here; and any one who would say that the mere lines—

"In circled rays his flowers of golden sheen
  Tower on the stem, and crown its vestment grey;
His glossy leaves of white bestreak'd with green
  Gleam with the watery diamond's varied ray"

—that these lines, in regard to the impression they create, can vie with the imitation of a Huysum, must either have never questioned his feelings, or be deliberately prepared to belie them They are verses that might be very beautiful, recited with the flower before us, but which by themselves express little or nothing. In each word I hear the elaborating poet, but I am very far from seeing the object itself.

Once more, therefore, I do not deny to language generally the power of depicting a corporeal whole according to its parts. It can do so, because its symbols, although consecutive, are still arbitrary, but I do deny

[2] Breitinger's Kritische Dichtkunst, vol ii p. 807.

it to language, as the means of poetry, because such verbal descriptions are entirely deficient in that illusion which is the principal end of poetry. And this illusion, I repeat, cannot fail to be wanting to them, because the coexistence of the body comes into collision with the consecutiveness of language, and though, during the solution of the former into the latter, the division of the whole into its parts is certainly made easy to us, the ultimate recomposition of these parts into their whole is rendered extremely difficult, and often impossible.

Everywhere, therefore, where illusion is not the question, where the writer appeals only to the understanding of his readers, and merely aims at conveying distinct and, as far as it is possible, complete ideas, these descriptions of bodies, so justly excluded from poetry, are quite in place; and not only the prose writer, but even the didactic poet (for where he is didactic he ceases to be a poet), may make use of them with great advantage. Thus, for instance, in his Georgics, Virgil describes a cow fit for breeding—

"Optima torvæ
Forma bovis, cui turpe caput, cui plurima cervix,
Et crurum tenus a mento palearia pendent.
Tum longo nullus lateri modus: omnia magna,
Pes etiam; et camuris hirtæ sub cornibus aures
Nec mihi displiceat maculis insignis et albo,
Aut juga detrectans, interdumque aspera cornu
Et faciem tauro propior, quæque ardua tota,
Et gradiens ima verrit vestigia cauda."[3]

Or a beautiful colt:—

"Illi ardua cervix,
Argutumque caput, brevis alvus obesaque terga;
Luxuriatque toris animosum pectus," &c.[4]

Here it is plain that the poet thought more about the discrimination of the different parts than about the whole. His object is to enumerate the points of a beautiful colt, or useful cow, in such a manner that on meeting with one or more of them we should be enabled

[3] Georg lib iii 51. [4] *Ibid* 79.

to form a judgment of their respective values. But whether or not these good points can be recomposed into an animated picture is a matter of perfect indifference to him.

With the exception of this use of it, the detailed description of corporeal objects, without the above-mentioned device of Homer for changing what is coexisting in them into what is really successive, has always been acknowledged by the finest judges to be mere cold, insignificant work, to which little or no genius can be attributed. When the poetaster, says Horace, can do nothing more, he at once begins to paint a grove, an altar, a brook meandering through pleasant meads, a rushing stream, or a rainbow:—

> "Lucus et ara Dianæ,
> Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros,
> Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur arcus."[5]

Pope, when a man, looked back with great contempt upon the descriptive efforts of his poetic childhood. He expressly desires that he who would worthily bear the name of poet should renounce description as early as possible, and declares that a purely descriptive poem is like a banquet consisting of nothing but sauces.[6] On Von

[5] De Art. Poet. 16.

[6] Prologue to the Satires, v. 340:—

> "That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
> But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song."

Ibid. v. 147.

> . . . "Who could take offence,
> While pure Description held the place of Sense?"

Warburton's remarks upon this last passage may be considered as an authentic explanation by the poet himself. "He uses PURE equivocally, to signify either chaste or empty; and has given in this line what he esteemed the true character of descriptive poetry, as it is called—a composition, in his opinion, as absurd as a feast made up of sauces. The use of a picturesque imagination is to brighten and adorn good sense; so that to employ it only in description is like children's delighting in a prism for the sake of its gaudy colours; which, when frugally managed and artfully disposed, might be made to represent and illustrate the noblest objects in nature." Both poet and commentator, it is true, look at the question from a moral rather than an artistic point of view. So much the better: it appears as valueless from one point as from the other.

Kleist's own authority I can assert that he took little pride in his 'Spring.' Had he lived longer, he would have thrown it into a totally different form He intended to methodize it, and reflected upon the means of causing the multitude of images, which he appears to have taken at random, now here, now there, from revivified creation, to arise and follow one another in a natural order before his eyes He would at the same time have followed the advice which Marmontel, doubtlessly referring to his eclogues, had bestowed on several German poets. He would have converted a series of images, thinly interspersed with feelings, into a succession of feelings but sparingly interwoven with images.[7]



CHAPTER XVIII.

AND yet could even Homer be said to have fallen into this cold description of material objects?

I venture to hope that there are but few passages which can be cited in support of this, and I feel assured that these will prove to be of such a kind as to confirm the rule from which they appear to be exceptions.

I maintain that succession of time is the department of the poet, as space is that of the painter

To introduce two necessarily distant points of time into one and the same painting, as Fr Mazzuoli has the rape of the Sabine women and their subsequent reconciliation of their husbands and relations, or as Titian has the whole history of the prodigal son, his disorderly life, his misery, and his repentance, is an encroachment by the painter upon the sphere of the poet which good taste could never justify.

To enumerate one by one to the reader, in order to afford him an idea of the whole, several parts or things,

[7] Poetique Française, t ii p. 501 "J'écrivais ces réflexions avant que les essais des Allemands dans ce genre (l'Eglogue) fussent connus parmi nous Ils ont exécuté ce que j'avais conçu, et s'ils parviennent à donner plus au moral et moins au détail des peintures physiques ils excelleront dans ce genre, plus riche, plus vaste, plus fécond, et infiniment plus naturel et plus moral que celui de la galanterie champêtre."

which, if they are to produce a whole, I must necessarily in nature take in at one glance, is an encroachment by the poet upon the sphere of the painter, whereby he squanders much imagination to no purpose.

Yet just as two equitable neighbouring powers, while not allowing either to presume to take unbecoming freedom within the heart of the dominions of the other, yet on their frontiers practise a mutual forbearance, by which both sides render a peaceful compensation for those slight aggressions which, in haste or from the force of circumstances, they have found themselves compelled to make on one another's privileges; so do painting and poetry.

In support of this view I will not cite the fact that in great historical pictures the single moment is almost always extended; and that perhaps there is scarcely any piece very rich in figures in which every one of them is in the same motion and attitude in which he would have been at the moment of the main action; some being represented in the posture of a little earlier, others in that of a little later, period. This freedom the master must rectify by a certain refinement in the arrangement, by bringing his several characters either prominently forwards, or placing them in the background, which allows them to take a more or less momentary share in what is passing. I will merely avail myself of a remark which Herr Mengs has made upon Raphael's drapery: "There is a cause," he says, "for all his folds, either in their own weight or in the motion of the limbs. We can often tell from them how they have been before. Herein Raphael has even sought to give significance. We can see from the folds whether a leg or arm, previous to this movement, was in a backward or forward posture, whether a bent limb had been, or was in the act of being, straightened, or whether it had been straight and was being contracted."[1] It is indisputable that in this case the artist combines two different moments in one. For, as that part of the drapery which rested upon the hinder foot would, unless the material were very stiff and entirely unsuitable

[1] Gedanken uber die Schonheit u. uber den Geschmack in der Malerei, p. 69.

for painting, immediately follow it in its motion forwards, there is no moment at which the garment can form any other folds than those which the present attitude of the limb requires; and, if it is made to fall in other folds, the limb is represented at the present moment and the drapery at the one previous to it. Yet in spite of this, who would be punctilious with the artist who has seen good to present us with both these moments at once? Who would not much rather praise him for having had the understanding and courage to fall into a slight error for the sake of attaining greater perfection of expression?

The poet deserves similar indulgence. His progressive imitation properly permits him to deal with only one side, one property of his material object, at a time. But, when the happy arrangement of his language enables him to do this with a single word, why should he not now and then venture to subjoin a second? Why not, if it requires the trouble, a third, or even a fourth? I have already remarked that in Homer, for example, a ship is only the black ship, or the hollow ship, or the swift ship: at the very most, the well-manned black ship. I wish, however, to be understood as speaking of his style generally; here and there a passage may be found where he adds the third descriptive epithet, καμπύλα κύκλα, χάλκεα, ὀκτάκνημα,[2] round, bronze, eight-spoked wheels. Also where the fourth ἀσπίδα πάντοσε ἐΐσην, καλὴν, χαλκείην, ἐξήλατον,[3] "a beautiful, brazen, wrought, all-even shield." Who would censure him for it? who is not rather grateful to him for this little luxuriancy, when he feels what a good effect it may produce in some few suitable passages.

But I will not allow the actual justification either of the poet or the painter to rest upon the above-mentioned analogy of two friendly neighbours. A mere analogy proves and justifies nothing. Their real justification is the fact that in the work of the painter the two different moments border so closely upon one another that, without hesitating, we count them as one; and that in the poet the several features, representing the various parts and

[2] Iliad, v. 722. [3] *Ibid.* xii. 294.

properties in space, follow one another with such speed and condensed brevity that we fancy that we hear all at once.

And herein, I maintain, Homer is aided in an unusual degree by the excellence of his language. It not only allows him all possible freedom in the accumulation and combination of epithets, but its arrangement of these multiplied epithets is so happy that we are relieved from the prejudicial delay of the noun to which they refer. In one or more of these advantages the modern languages fail entirely Some which, as the French, for instance, must convert the καμπύλα κύκλα, χάλκεα, ὀκτάκνημα into such a periphrasis as "the round wheels, which were made of brass and had eight spokes," express the sense, but annihilate the picture; yet here the picture is everything and the sense nothing, and the one without the other turns a very lively poet into a most tedious twaddler. This fate has often befallen Homer under the pen of the conscientious Dacier. Our German tongue, on the other hand, though it can replace the epithets by equivalent adjectives quite as short, has not the power of imitating the advantageous arrangement of the Greek. We say, indeed, "the round, brazen, eight-spoked" (*die runden ehernen, achtspeichigten*), but "wheels" (*Räder*) drags behind. Who does not feel that three distinct predicates, before we learn the subject, can only produce a weak and confused picture? The Greek joins the subject at once to the first predicate, and leaves the others to follow. He says, "round wheels, brazen, eight-spoked." Thus we know at once what he is speaking of, and become acquainted, conformably with the natural order of thought, first with the thing of which he speaks, and afterwards what is accidental to it This advantage our language has not; or, perhaps, I should say possesses, but can rarely use without being equivocal It comes to the same thing. For, if we place the epithets after the substantive, they must stand *in statu absoluto;* we must say, "round wheels, brazen, and eight-spoked" (*runde Räder, ehern und achtspeichigt*). Now, in this *statu*, our adjectives are just the same as adverbs; and, if we construe them as such with

the next verb that is predicated of the subject, must produce not unfrequently a completely false and at all events a very ambiguous meaning.

But I am wasting my time on trifles, and appear as if I meant to forget the shield—that famous picture, the shield of Achilles, in respect of which especially, Homer, in ancient times, was regarded as a master of painting.[4] A shield at any rate, it will be said, is a single material object, which a poet cannot be allowed to describe according to its parts in juxtaposition. And yet Homer, in more than a hundred splendid lines, has described its material, its form, and all the figures which filled its enormous surface, so circumstantially and closely, that modern artists have not found it difficult to produce a drawing of it corresponding in all points.

My reply to this particular objection is, that I have already answered it. Homer does not describe the shield as finished and complete, but as it is being wrought. Thus he here also makes use of that knack of art which I have commended; changing that which, in his subject, is coexistent into what is consecutive, and thereby converting a tedious painting of a body into a vivid picture of an action. We see, not the shield, but the divine craftmaster as he executes it. He steps with hammer and tongs before his anvil, and, after he has forged the plates out of the raw material, the figures which he destines for the ornament of the shield rise, one after another, out of the bronze, under our eyes, beneath the finer strokes of his hammer. We never lose sight of him until all is ready; and when it is complete, we feel indeed astonishment at the work, but it is the confident astonishment of an eye-witness, who has seen it produced.

This cannot be said of the shield of Æneas in Virgil. The Roman poet either did not here feel the refinement of his model, or the objects which he wished to introduce upon his shield appeared to him of such a kind as not well to admit of being executed before our eyes. They were prophecies, in respect to which it would certainly have been

[4] Dionysius Halicarnassi in Vita Homeri apud Th. Gale in Opusc. Mythol. p 401.

inappropriate if the god had uttered them in our presence as distinctly as the poet has afterwards explained them. Prophecies, as such, require a darker language, in which the real names of the persons of futurity, of whom they speak, are out of place; yet, apparently, these real names were all-important to the courtier poet.[5] But if this defence justifies him, it does not do away with the bad effect which his deviation from Homer's style here produces. All readers of refined taste will allow that I am right. The preparations which Vulcan makes for his work are nearly the same in Virgil as in Homer. But, whilst in Homer not only the preparations for labour, but the labour itself, is seen, Virgil, after he has given us a general view of the god employed with his Cyclopes—

[5] I see that Servius adduces another argument in Virgil's justification. For Servius also has remarked the difference that exists between Virgil's shield and Homer's. "Sane interest inter hunc et Homeri clypeum; illic enim singula dum fiunt narrantur, hic vero perfecto opere noscuntur; nam et hic arma prius accipit Æneas, quam spectaret, ibi postquam omnia narrata sunt, sic a Thetide deferuntur ad Achillem" (Ad v. 625, lib viii Æneid). And why? Because, in Servius's opinion, not only the unimportant events, which the poet mentions, but

. . . "genus omne futuræ
Stirpis ab Ascanio, pugnataque in ordine bella,"

were wrought upon the shield of Æneas. It would not then have been possible for the whole series of posterity to have been mentioned individually, and for the wars they fought to have been related in chronological order by the poet, as quickly as they would have been executed on the shield by Vulcan. This seems to be the meaning of the somewhat obscure passage in Servius: "Opportune ergo Virgilius, quia non videtur simul et narrationis celeritas potuisse connecti, et opus tam velociter expedire, ut ad verbum posset occurrere." As Virgil could only bring forward a small part of the *non enarrabile textum clypei*, he could not even do it, whilst Vulcan was forging it, but was forced to be silent until all was ready. I wish, for Virgil's sake, that Servius's reasoning was altogether without foundation; my defence would be far more creditable for him. What necessity was there for his introducing the whole of Roman history into his shield? In but a few pictures Homer made his shield an epitome of everything that happens in the world. One would be almost led to think that Virgil, though he despaired of surpassing Homer in the execution of his shield, and in his choice of subjects for it, hoped at least to exceed him in the number of his subjects. And what would have been more childish?

"Ingentem clypeum informant . . . .
. . . Alii ventosis follibus auras
Accipiunt, redduntque: alii stridentia tingunt
Æra lacu; gemit impositis incudibus antrum;
Illi inter sese multa vi brachia tollunt
In numerum, versantque tenaci forcipe massam,"[6]

lets the curtain fall at once, and transports us to quite a different scene, whence he gradually conducts us to the valley, in which Venus comes to Æneas with the arms, that have been, in the meantime, completed. She sets them against the trunk of an oak, and, after the hero has sufficiently gazed at, admired, felt, and tried them, the description, or rather the painting, of the shield begins, which by the everlasting "Here is" and "There is," "Next there stands" and "Not far off is seen," grows so cold and tedious that all the poetic ornament which a Virgil could bestow on it is required to prevent its becoming intolerable. Since this picture, in the next place, is not delineated by Æneas, being, as he is, amused with the mere figures, and knowing nothing about their meaning—

"Rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet;"

nor by Venus, although she must presumably have known just as much of the future destinies of her beloved progeny as did her easy-going husband; but since the explanation is given by the mouth of the poet himself, therefore the action of the poem is manifestly at a standstill whilst it lasts. Not one of his characters takes any part in it; nor is the sequel in the least affected, whether this or anything else is represented on the shield; the clever courtier, who adorns his subject with every kind of flattering allusion, is transparent in it all, but not the great genius, which relies entirely upon the intrinsic merit of his work, and rejects all external means of being interesting. The shield of Æneas is, in consequence really an interpolation, simply and solely designed to flatter the national pride of the Roman people. It is a foreign stream turned by the poet

[6] Æneid, viii 447.

into his main river to make the latter a little more striking The shield of Achilles, on the contrary, is the growth of its own fruitful soil: for a shield was to be made, and, since nothing that is necessary comes from the hand of the divinity without grace also, it must needs have ornament. But the art lay in treating these decorations merely as such; in interweaving them into the main subject, and making it furnish the opportunity of showing them to us: all this could only be accomplished in the style of Homer. Homer makes Vulcan expend his skill in decoration because he has to produce, and whilst he does produce, a shield that is worthy of him Virgil, on the other hand, appears to make him forge the shield for the sake of its decorations, since he considers them of sufficient importance to be described particularly, long after the shield has been completed.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE objections which the elder Scaliger, Perrault, Terasson, and others have raised against Homer's shield, as well as the replies made to them by Dacier, Boivin, and Pope, are well known. To me these last appear often to commit themselves too far, and, from a confidence in the goodness of their cause, to have maintained opinions as incorrect as they are ineffective for the justification of the poet.

To meet the main objection, that Homer fills the shield with such a number of figures that they cannot possibly be contained within its circumference, Boivin undertook to have it drawn, giving heed to the required measurement His idea of the several concentric circles is very ingenious, although the words of the poet do not afford any ground for it, and there are no traces of the ancients having employed such compartments on their shields. I should rather, since Homer calls it σάκος πάντοσε δεδαιλωμένον, "a shield artistically wrought on all sides," obtain a larger surface by calling in the concave side to my assistance. for that the ancient artists did not leave this side unorna-

mented is proved from Pheidias' shield of Minerva [1] But it was not enough that Boivin neglected to avail himself of this advantage, he unnecessarily increased in number the designs themselves, for which he was obliged to find room in a space thus diminished by one half, whilst he broke up into two or three distinct pictures what the poet manifestly intended for only one. I know very well what was his inducement to do so, but he ought not to have been influenced by it. Instead of labouring to satisfy the requirements of his opponents, he should have shown them that their demands were unreasonable.

I shall be able to make myself more clearly comprehended by an example When Homer says of a town[2]—

λαοὶ δ' εἰν ἀγορῇ ἔσαν ἀθρόοι· ἔνθα δὲ νεῖκος
ὠρώρει· δύο δ' ἄνδρες ἐνείκεον εἵνεκα ποινῆς
ἀνδρὸς ἀποφθιμένου ὁ μὲν εὔχετο, πάντ' ἀποδοῦναι,
δήμῳ πιφαύσκων· ὁ δ' ἀναίνετο, μηδὲν ἑλέσθαι.
ἄμφω δ' ἱέσθην ἐπὶ ἴστορι πεῖραρ ἑλέσθαι.
λαοὶ δ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἐπήπυον ἀμφὶς ἀρωγοί.
κήρυκες δ' ἄρα λαὸν ἐρήτυον· οἱ δὲ γέροντες
εἵατ' ἐπὶ ξεστοῖσι λίθοις, ἱερῷ ἐνὶ κύκλῳ·
σκῆπτρα δὲ κηρύκων ἐν χέρσ' ἔχον ἠεροφώνων.
τοῖσιν ἔπειτ' ἤισσον, ἀμοιβηδὶς δὲ δίκαζον.
κεῖτο δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέσσοισι δύω χρυσοῖο τάλαντα.

—I do not believe that he intended to draw more than one picture—that of a public trial about the contested payment of a heavy fine for a manslaughter that had been committed. An artist who wishes to execute this subject cannot make use of more than one moment of it at once: either the moment of the accusation, or of the examination of witnesses, or the giving judgment, or any other moment, before, after, or between these points, that seems most suitable to him This moment he renders as pregnant as possible, and executes it with all the illusion which constitutes the great superiority of art over poetry in the representation of visible objects The poet is infinitely surpassed in this respect, and, if he wishes to paint

[1] "Scuto ejus in quo Amazonum prælium cælavit intumescente ambitu parmæ, ejusdem concava parte deorum et gigantum dimicationem." —Plinius, lib. xxxvi. 4. 4

[2] Iliad, xviii. 497.

the same object in words without complete failure, what can he do but avail himself likewise of his own peculiar advantages? And these are, the liberty to extend his description over the time preceding and subsequent to the single instant which is the subject of the picture. and the power of showing us not only what the artist shows us, but also that which the latter can only leave to our conjecture. Through this liberty and this power alone is the poet enabled to rival the artist Their works will appear most similar when their effects are equally lively, not when the one imparts to the soul through the ear neither more nor less than the other presents to the eye. If Boivin had judged the passage of Homer according to this principle, he would not have divided it into as many pictures as he thought he perceived distinct periods of time in it. It is true that all that Homer says could not have been combined in a single picture. The accusation and defence, the production of witnesses, the clamours of the divided crowd, the endeavours of the herald to still the tumult, and the decision of the arbitrators, are things which must follow one another, and cannot exist beside one another. Still, to express myself scholastically, what is not contained in the painting *actu* is there *virtute;* and the only true method of imitating a material picture by words is that which combines what is virtually implied in it with what is actually visible, and does not confine itself within the limits of art; within which the poet indeed can reckon the data for a picture, but can never produce a picture itself

In the same manner Boivin divides the picture of the beleaguered town[3] into three different designs. He might just as well have divided it into a dozen parts as three. For when he had once failed to seize upon the spirit of the poet, and had required him to submit to the unities of material painting, he might have found so many transgressions of these unities that it would have been almost necessary to allot a separate compartment on the shield to every separate trait of the poet. But, in my opinion, Homer has not drawn more than ten distinct pictures upon

[3] Iliad, xviii 509.

the entire shield, each of which he begins with ἐν μὲν ἔτευξε, or ἐν δὲ ποίησε, or ἐν δ' ἐτίθει, or ἐν δὲ ποίκιλλε Ἀμφιγυήεις.[4] Where there are not these introductory words, there is no ground for assuming a distinct picture. On the contrary, all they enclose must be considered as a single picture, wanting only that arbitrary concentration into a single point of time which, as a poet, he was in no way bound to observe. I should rather say that had he maintained and rigidly complied with it, had he abstained from introducing the smallest feature, which could not have been combined with it in a material representation of his picture, in a word, had he so acted as his critics would have desired him, he would not, it is true, have laid himself open to the censure of these gentlemen, but he would not have won the admiration of any man of taste.

Pope approved of the divisions and designs of Boivin, but thought that he had in addition made an extraordinary discovery, when he further argued that each of these subdivided pictures could be indicated according to the most rigid rules of painting in vogue at the present day. He found contrast, perspective, and the three unities all most strictly adhered to in them. But he knew quite well that, on the authority of good and trustworthy evidence, painting at the time of the Trojan war was still in its cradle. Homer therefore must either, by virtue of his divine genius, have not so much carried out what painting could accomplish at that time or in his own day, as divined what it was capable of accomplishing absolutely; or the evidence itself cannot be of so authoritative a nature as to outweigh the palpable testimony of the skilfully wrought shield. He who will may adopt the former

[4] The first picture commences at line 483, and finishes at line 489. The second lasts from 490–509; the third from 510–540; the fourth from 541–549; the fifth from 550–560; the sixth from 561–572; the seventh from 573–586; the eighth from 587–589; the ninth from 590–605; and the tenth from 606–608 The third picture is the only one that has not the introductory words quoted in the text; but from the words at the commencement of the second—

ἐν δὲ δύω ποίησε πόλεις,

and from the circumstances of the case itself, it is plain enough that it must be a separate picture

hypothesis; of the last, at least, no one will be persuaded who knows anything more of the history of art than the mere data of the historians. For the belief that painting in Homer's time was still in its infancy is not only supported by the authority of Pliny and other writers, but is grounded upon the decisive proof afforded by the works of art enumerated by the ancients, that many centuries later art had not advanced much further, and that the paintings of a Polygnotus, for instance, would be far from able to sustain the test which Pope believes the pictures in Homer's shield are capable of undergoing. The two large pieces of this master at Delphi, of which Pausanias has left us so minute a description,[5] are plainly devoid of all perspective. The ancients possessed no knowledge of this branch of art, and what Pope adduces to show that Homer had some idea of it only proves that his own ideas of it were of the most imperfect nature.[6] "That Homer," he says, "was not a stranger to aerial *perspective* appears in his expressly marking the distance of object from object: he tells us, for instance, that the two spies lay a little remote from the other figures; and that the oak, under which was spread the banquet of the reapers, stood *apart;* what he says of the valley sprinkled all over with cottages and flocks appears to be a description of a large country in perspective. And indeed a general argument for this may be drawn from the number of figures on the shield, which could not be all expressed in their full magnitude, and this is therefore a sort of proof that the art of lessening them according to perspective was known at that time."[7]

[5] Phocic cap xxv.–xxxi.

[6] To prove that I have just grounds for what I say of Pope, I will quote in the original the following passage from him: "That he was no stranger to aerial perspective appears in his expressly marking the distance from object to object; he tells us," &c I repeat, Pope has here made an entirely false use of the term *aerial perspective* (perspective aerienne), for it has nothing to do with the lessening of size in proportion to distance, but merely expresses the change and increasing faintness of colour, according to the condition of the air, or medium through which it is viewed Any one who could commit this blunder must have been ignorant of the whole matter.

[7] [Observations on the shield of Achilles, Pope's Iliad, B xviii. vol v p 169, edited by Gilbert Wakefield, B.A. (London, T. Longman, and B Lawse, 1796).—TR]

Mere observance of the law, derived from optical experience, that a distant object appears less than a neighbouring one, is far from constituting perspective in a picture. Perspective requires a single point of view, a definite, natural horizon; and it was in this that the ancient paintings were deficient The ground in the pictures of Polygnotus was not horizontal, but was so excessively raised at the back that the figures which ought to have stood behind appeared to be above one another. And if this position of different figures, and of groups of them, was universal, as seems to be shown by the ancient bas-reliefs, where the hindmost figures always stand higher than, and overlook, the foremost, it is natural to assume that it is employed in Homer's description, and that those of his designs which, in accordance with this practice, can be combined in a single picture are not needlessly separated. Consequently the twofold scene in the peaceful town, through the streets of which a joyous wedding procession moves, whilst a weighty lawsuit is being decided in the market-place, does not necessarily involve two pictures. Homer certainly might easily think of them as one, since he pictured the whole town from so high a point of view that he could obtain an uninterrupted view of the streets and market-place at the same time.

It is my opinion that real perspective in painting was discovered, as it were, experimentally by means of scene painting; and, even when this last had reached perfection, it must still have been far from easy to apply its rules to a picture painted on a single surface. At any rate, in the paintings of a later period among the antiquities of Herculaneum, such numerous and manifold offences against perspective are to be found as would not be pardoned even in a novice.[8]

But I will spare myself the trouble of collecting my scattered observations on a question of which I may hope to find the most satisfactory solution in the history of art promised us by Herr Winckelmann.[9]

[8] Betracht uber die Malerei, p. 185.
[9] Written in the year 1763

CHAPTER XX.

BUT I return to my old path, if indeed one who is rambling only for his own pleasure can be said to have any.

What I have asserted of bodily objects generally is doubl true when applied to beautiful bodily objects.

Material beauty arises from the harmonious effect of numerous parts, all of which the sight is capable of comprehending at the same time. It requires, therefore, that these parts should lie in juxtaposition; and since things whose parts lie in juxtaposition are the peculiar objects of the plastic arts, these it is, and these only, which can imitate material beauty.

The poet—since he can only exhibit in succession its component parts—entirely abstains from the description of material beauty as beauty. He feels that these parts, ranged one after another, cannot possibly have the effect that they produce when closely arranged together, that the concentrating glance which, after their enumeration, we try to cast back upon them imparts to us no harmonious image, that it surpasses the power for human imagination to represent to oneself what effect such and such a mouth, nose, and eyes will produce together unless we can call to mind from nature or art a similar composition of like parts

And in this respect Homer is the ensample of all ensamples He says Nireus was beautiful; Achilles was still more beautiful, Helen was endowed with a godlike beauty. But nowhere does he enter upon a detailed description of these beauties, and yet the whole poem is based upon the loveliness of Helen. How a more modern poet would have dilated upon it!

There was a certain Constantinus Manasses who attempted to adorn his cold chronicles with a description of Helen I have to thank him for his attempt. For I really do not know where else I could have extracted an example from which it would have been so palpably clear how foolish it may prove to venture upon that which

Homer in his wisdom has left unattempted. When I read there:—[1]

ἦν ἡ γυνὴ περικαλλής, εὔοφρυς εὐχρουστάτη,
εὐπάρειος, εὐπρόσωπος, βοῶπις, χιονόχρους,
ἑλικοβλέφαρος, ἁβρά χαρίτων γέμον ἄλσος,
λευκοβραχίων, τρυφερά, κάλλος ἀντικρὺς ἔμπνουν,
τὸ πρόσωπον καταλευκόν, ἡ παρειὰ ῥοδόχρους,
τὸ πρόσωπον ἐπίχαρι, τὸ βλέφαρον ὡραῖον,
κάλλος ἀνεπιτήδευτον, ἀβάπτιστον, αὐτόχρουν,
ἔβαπτε τὴν λευκότητα ῥοδοχρία πυρινή,
ὡς εἴ τις τὸν ἐλέφαντα βάψει λαμπρᾷ πορφύρᾳ.
δειρὴ μακρά, καταλευκός, ὅθεν, ἐμυθουργήθη
κυκνογενῆ τὴν εὔοπτον Ἑλένην χρηματίζειν.

[1] Constantinus Manasses, Compend. Chron p 20, edit Venet Mme Dacier was well pleased with the whole of this portrait by Manasses, short of the tautologies: "De Helenæ pulchritudine omnium optime Constantinus Manasses, nisi in eo tautologiam reprehendas (Ad Dyctin Cretensem, lib i. cap 3, p 5) She also quotes, after Mezeriac (Comment sur les Epîtres d'Ovide, ii 361), the descriptions which Dares, Phrygius, and Cedrenus give of the beauty of Helen In the first there occurs a trait which sounds rather curious Dares pointedly says of Helen that she had a mole between her eyebrows · "notam inter duo supercilia habentem" Surely that was no beauty! I wish that the French lady had given her opinion upon it My own belief is that the word nota is here corrupt, and that Dares is speaking of what the Greeks used to call *μεσόφρυον*, and the Latins *glabella*. The eyebrows of Helen, he means to say, did not meet, but were slightly separated. The ancients were divided in their taste upon this point. Some admired a space between the eyebrows, some not (Junius, de Pictura Vet lib iii cap 9, p 245) Anacreon held a middle course; the eyebrows of his beloved maiden were neither strikingly divided, nor did they run completely into each other. They died away gently into a single point. He says to the artist who is painting her (Od. 28):—

τὸ μεσόφρυον δὲ μή μοι
διάκοπτε, μήτε μίσγε
ἐχέτω δ', ὅπως ἐκείνη,
τὶ λεληθότως σύνοφρυν
βλεφάρων ἴτυν κελαινήν·

This is Pauw's reading, but the ordinary one admits of the same sense being put upon it, which has been rightly given by Henr. Stephanus.—

"Supercilii nigrantes
Discrimina nec arcus
Confundito nec illos:
Sed junge sic ut anceps
Divortium relinquas,
Quale esse cernis ipsi"

I seem to see stones being rolled up a mountain, upon whose summit a magnificent structure is to be raised out of them, but which all of their own accord roll down on the other side. What image does this throng of words leave behind it? What was the appearance of Helen? If a thousand persons were to read this description, would not every one of them form a different idea of her?

Still, it is true the politic verses of a monk are not poetry. Let us listen to Ariosto whilst he describes his bewitching Alcina:—[2]

If then I have hit upon Dares' meaning, what word must be read for *notam?* Perhaps *moram* At any rate it is certain that *mora* means not only the lapse of time before the occurrence of any event, but also the impediment, the space, which separates one thing from another.

"Ego inquieta montium jaceam mora,"

is the wish of the raving Hercules in Seneca (v. 1215), which passage Gronovius has well explained as follows: "Optat se medium jacere inter duas Symplegades, illarum velut moram, impedimentum, obicem; qui eas moretur, vetet aut satis arcte conjungi, aut rursus distrahi." The same poet uses the phrase lacertorum moræ as equivalent to *juncturæ* (Schrœderus, ad v 762, Thyest).

[2] Orlando Furioso, Canto vii St 11–15. "She was in person so well formed as was not to be depicted but by skilled painters. with yellow hair, long and knotted up, than which no gold is more resplendent and lustrous. In her delicate cheek were spread the mingled hues of roses and lilies, of smooth ivory was her joyous brow, whose expanse was confined within due bounds

"Beneath two black and very delicate arches are two black eyes or rather two shining suns, sweetly piteous in look and slow in movement: around which love seems to play and fly, and shoot thence his whole quiver, visibly invading hearts Thence in the middle of the countenance descends the nose which envy knows not how to make better.

"Beneath which, as it were between two vales, is the mouth endued with native cinnabar Here are two rows of choicest pearls which a beauteous and sweet lip shuts and opens Thence issue the gracious words which make gentle each rude and rugged heart. Here forms itself that kindly smile which discloses in itself a paradise upon earth.

"White as snow is the beautiful neck, as milk the breast. the neck is round, the breast swelling and large Two young apples made of pure ivory come and go like a wave on the ocean shore when a gentle gale falls on the sea." (The rest Argus himself would not have been able to see; but it was easy to judge that what was concealed agreed with what was visible to the eye)

"The arms show themselves of due measure: and the white hand is often seen, somewhat long and of small breadth, on which no knot is visible, nor vein protrudes At the extremity of this glorious form the short and dry and rounded foot is seen The angelic semblances in heaven conceived are not to be concealed beneath any veil."

"Di persona era tanto ben formata,
Quanto mai finger san Pittori industri:
Con bionda chioma, lunga ed annodata,
Oro non è, che più risplenda, e lustri,
Spargeasi per la guancia delicata
Misto color di rose e di ligustri.
Di terso avorio era la fronte lieta,
Che lo spazio finia con giusta meta.

"Sotto duo negri, e sottilissimi archi
Son duo negri occhi, anzi duo chiari soli,
Pietosi a riguardare, a mover parchi,
Intorno cui par ch' Amor scherzi, e voli,
E ch' indi tutta la faretra scarchi,
E che visibilmente i cori involi.
Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende,
Che non trova l' invidia ove l' emende.

"Sotto quel sta, quasi fra due vallette,
La bocca sparsa di natio cinabro;
Quivi due filze son di perle elette,
Che chiude ed apre un bello e dolce labro;
Quindi escon le cortesi parolette
Da render molle ogni cor rozzo e scabro;
Quivi si forma quel suave riso,
Ch' apre a sua posta in terra il paradiso.

"Bianca neve è il bel collo, e 'l petto latte:
Il collo è tondo, il petto colmo e largo.
Due pome acerbe, e pur d' avorio fatte,
Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo,
Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.
Non potria l' altre parti veder Argo:
Ben si può giudicar che corrisponde,
A quel ch' appar di fuor, quel che s' asconde.

"Mostran le braccia sua misura giusta;
E la candida man spesso si vede,
Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta,
Dove nè nodo appar, nè vena eccede.

Si vede al fin della persona augusta
Il breve, asciutto, e ritondetto piede.
Gli Angelici sembianti nati in cielo
Non si ponno celar sotto alcun velo."

Milton, when speaking of the Pandemonium, says—

"The work some praise, and some the architect."

The praise of the one, therefore, does not always imply the praise of the other. A work of art may deserve all possible approbation without affording any special renown to the artist On the other hand, an artist may justly demand our admiration, even though his work do not afford us full satisfaction. This principle should never be forgotten, and it will often enable us to reconcile entirely conflicting judgments This is the case here. Dolce in his dialogues on painting makes Aretino speak in the most exaggerated terms of the stanzas I have just quoted.[3] I, on the contrary, have selected it as an instance of painting without picture. We are both in the right. Dolce's admiration is called forth by the knowledge of physical beauty which the poet displays in it; whilst I look merely to the effect which this knowledge, when expressed in words, can produce upon my imaginative powers. Dolce concludes from this knowledge that good poets are no less good painters; and I from this effect, that what is most easily expressed by the painter through lines and colours is most difficult to be expressed by words. Dolce recommends Ariosto's description to all artists as the most perfect image of a beautiful woman, whilst I hold it up to all poets as a most instructive warning not to essay still more disastrously what with an Ariosto must needs fail. It may be that when Ariosto says—

"Di persona era tanto ben formata,
Quanto mai finger san Pittori industri"

[3] Dialogo della Pittura, intitolato l'Aretino · Firenze, 1735, p 178 · "Se vogliono i Pittori senza fatica trovare un perfetto esempio di bella Donna, leggano quelle stanze dell' Ariosto, nelle quali egli discrive mirabilmente le bellezze della Fata Alcina . e vedranno parimente, quanto i buoni Poeti siano ancora essi Pittori"

—he proves that he thoroughly understood the rules of proportion as they have always been studied by the most industrious artist from nature and the antique.[4] It may be that in the mere words—[5]

> "Spargeasi per la guancia delicata
> Misto color di rose e di ligustri"

—he shows himself to be the most complete master of colouring, a very Titian.[6] We may, from the fact that he only compares the hair of Alcina to gold, but does not call it golden, conclude, with equal significance, that he disapproved of the use of an actually golden tint. We may even, in the descending nose—

> "Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende"

—discover the profile of those ancient Greek noses which were afterwards borrowed from the Grecian artists by the Romans. What is the use of all this learning and observation to us readers, whose desire is to believe that we see a beautiful woman, and to feel at that belief some of those soft emotions of the blood which accompany the actual sight of beauty? If the poet does know by what proportions a beautiful form is produced, do we thereby know it too? And even if we do know it, does he cause us to see these proportions here? or does he make the difficulty of remembering them in a lively and compre-

[4] Dialogo della Pittura, intitolato l'Aretino: "Ecco, che, quanto alla proportione, l'ingeniosissimo Ariosto assegna le migliore, che sappiano formar le mani de' più eccellenti Pittori, usando questa voce industri, per dinotar la diligenza, che conviene al buono artefice"

[5] *Ibid* p 182: "Qui l'Ariosto colorisce, e in questo suo colorire dimostra essere un Titiano."

[6] *Ibid* p 180: "Poteva l'Ariosto nella guisa, che ha *detto* chioma bionda, dir chioma d'oro. ma gli parve forse che avrebbe avuto troppo del poetico Da che si può ritrar, che'l Pittore dee imitar l'oro, e non metterlo (come fanno i Miniatori) nelle sue Pitture, in modo, che si possa dire, que'capelli non sono d'oro, ma pur che risplendano, come l'oro" Dolce's subsequent quotation from Athenæus is only remarkable for its inaccuracy. I speak of it at another place.

Ibid p. 182 "Il naso, che discende giù, avendo peraventura la consideratione a quelle forme de' nasi, che si veggono ne' ritratti delle belle Romane antiche."

hensible manner in the least degree lighter? A forehead confined within the proper limits—

> . . . . . . "la fronte,
> Che lo spazio finia con giusta meta,"

a nose in which envy itself finds nothing to improve—

> "Che non trova l' invidia, ove l' emende;"

a hand somewhat long and small in breadth—

> "Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta;"

what image do all these general phrases call up? In the mouth of a drawing master who wished to call the attention of his scholars to the beauties of the class-model they might mean something; for let his pupils have but one look at his model and they see the proper limits of the joyous forehead, they see the fairest chiselling of the nose, the narrowness of the delicate hand. But in the poet I see nothing, and perceive with vexation the uselessness of my most strenuous efforts to see something.

In this point, in which he can imitate Homer merely by doing nothing, Virgil also has been tolerably happy. His Dido, too, is never anything more to him than "pulcherrima Dido." When he wishes to be more circumstantial about her he is so in the description of her rich dress and magnificent appearance—

> "Tandem progreditur . . . .
> Sidoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo:
> Cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum,
> Aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem."[7]

If therefore, on this account, any one were to apply to him, what that ancient artist said to a pupil who had painted a Helen covered with ornaments, "Since you could not paint her beautiful, you have at least made her fine," Virgil would reply, "It is not my fault that I could not paint her beautiful; the blame falls upon the limits of my art; be it my praise to have restrained myself within these limits."

I must not here forget the two songs of Anacreon, in

[7] Æneid, iv. 136.

which he analyses for us the beauty of his mistress, and of his Bathyllus.[8] The device which he employs makes all good. He imagines that he has a painter before him, who is working under his eye. Thus, says he, paint me the hair; thus the brow, the eyes, the mouth; thus the neck and bosom; thus the hip and hands. What the artist could only put together part by part the poet could only give directions for part by part It is not his intention that in these oral directions to the painter we should feel and acknowledge the whole beauty of the beloved object; he himself perceives the incapability of words to express it, and for that very reason summons to his aid the expression of art, the illusion of which he so highly extols, that the whole song appears to be an ode in the praise of art rather than of his mistress. He sees not her image, but herself, and fancies that she is on the point of opening her mouth to speak.

ἀπέχει βλέπω γὰρ αὐτήν·
τάχα, κηρέ, καὶ λαλήσεις.

In his sketch of Bathyllus also the praise of the beautiful boy is so interwoven with that of the art and the artist, that it becomes doubtful in whose especial honour Anacreon composed the song. He combines the most beautiful portions from different pictures in which the pre-eminent loveliness of these portions was the characteristic; the neck is borrowed from an Adonis, the breast and hands from a Mercury, the thighs from a Pollux, the belly from a Bacchus; until at last he sees the whole of Bathyllus in a finished Apollo of the artist.

μετὰ δὲ πρόσωπον ἔστω,
τὸν Ἀδώνιδος παρελθὼν
ἐλεφάντινος τράχηλος·
μεταμάζιον δὲ ποίει
διδύμας τε χεῖρας Ἑρμοῦ,
Πολυδεύκεος δὲ μηρούς,
Διονυσίην δὲ νηδύν.

. . . . .

τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα δὲ τοῦτον
καθελών, ποίει Βάθυλλον.

[8] Od. xxviii xxix.

Lucian also knew not how to convey any idea of the beauty of Panthea otherwise than by a reference to the most lovely female statues of the old artists.[9] Yet what is this but an acknowledgment that language by itself is here without power; that poetry falters and eloquence grows speechless, unless art, in some measure, serve them as an interpreter.



CHAPTER XXI.

BUT does not poetry lose too much if we deprive her of all pictures of physical beauty? Who would deprive her of them? Because we endeavour to inspire her with a dislike of a single path, in which she expects to attain to such pictures while searching after and painfully wandering among the footsteps of her sister art, without ever reaching the same goal as she: because, I say, we would debar her from such a path as this, do we exclude her from every other, where art in her turn must gaze after her steps?

Even Homer, who so diligently abstains from all detailed descriptions of material beauties, from whom we but just learn by a passing notice that Helen had white arms[1] and beautiful hair,[2] even he, for all this, knew how to convey to us an idea of her beauty, which far exceeds anything that art with this aim is able to accomplish. Let us call to mind the passage where Helen steps into an assembly of the elders of the Trojan people. The venerable old men see her, and one said to the other—

> οὐ νέμεσις, Τρῶας καὶ ἐϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς
> τοιῇδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν·
> αἰνῶς ἀθανάτῃσι θεῇς εἰς ὦπα ἔοικεν.[3]

What can impart a more lively idea of beauty than that cold old age should confess it to be worthy of that war which had cost so much blood and so many tears.

What Homer could not describe by its constituent parts he forces us to acknowledge in its effect. Paint for us, ye poets, the delight, the affection, the love, the rapture which

[9] Εἰκόνες, vol. ii. p. 481. Edit. Reitz.
[1] Iliad, iii. 121. [2] *Ibid.* 329. [3] *Ibid.* 156.

beauty produces, and you have painted beauty itself. Who can image to himself as ugly the beloved object at whose sight Sappho confesses she is deprived of all sense and thought? Who does not believe that he sees the most perfectly beautiful form as soon as he sympathizes with the feelings which only such a form can awaken? We believe we enjoy the sight that Ovid enjoyed,[4] not because he exhibits to us the beautiful form of his Lesbia part by part—

> "Quos humeros, quales vidi tetigique lacertos!
> Forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi!
> Quam castigato planus sub pectore venter!
> Quantum et quale latus! quam juvenile femur!"

but because he does it with that licentious intoxication by which our longings are so easily aroused.

Again, another means by which poetry comes up with art in the description of typical beauty is the change of beauty into charm. Charm is beauty in motion, and is, for this very reason, less suitable to the painter than to the poet. The painter can only leave motion to conjecture, while, in fact, his figures are motionless. Consequently, with him, charm becomes grimace. But in poetry it remains what it is, a transitory beauty that we would gladly see repeated. It comes and goes, and since we can generally recall to our minds a movement more easily and vividly than mere forms or colours, charm necessarily, in the same circumstances, produces a stronger effect upon us than beauty. All that is pleasing and stirring in the description of Alcina is charm. Her eyes make an impression upon us, not because they are black and fiery, but because—

> "Pietosi a riguardar, a mover parchi"

—they look gracefully around her, and move slowly because love hovers over them, and empties his whole quiver from them. Her mouth enraptures, not because two rows of choice pearls are inclosed by the native vermilion of her lips, but because here is formed that lovely smile which in itself already opens a paradise upon earth; because from

[4] Ovid. Amor lib. i. eleg. v. 18.

it proceeds the sound of those friendly words by which every rude heart is softened. Her bosom charms, less because milk and ivory and apples are called up by its whiteness and delicate shape, than because we see it softly swell and fall, as the wave upon the extreme edge of the shore, when the zephyr playfully contends with the ocean.

> "Due pome acerbe, e pur d' avorio fatte,
> Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo,
> Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte"

I am convinced that a few such traits as these, compressed into one or two stanzas, would produce a far higher effect than all the five to which Ariosto spreads them out while weaving amongst them cold features of a beautiful form, far too learned to affect our feelings

Anacreon himself chose to fall into the seeming impropriety of requiring an impossibility of the painter, rather than to leave the form of his mistress unenlivened by charm.

> *τρυφεροῦ δ' ἔσω γενείου*
> *περὶ λυγδίνῳ τραχήλῳ*
> *Χάριτες πέτοιντο πᾶσαι.*

He bids the artist make all the graces hover around her soft chin, her marble neck! How so? According to the closest interpretation of the words, his command was incapable of being executed in painting. The painter might impart to the chin the most beautiful rounding and the sweetest dimple, "Amoris digitulo impressum" (for the *ἔσω* appears to me to allude to a dimple). He might impart the loveliest carnation to the neck, but further he could not go. The turnings of this beauteous neck, the play of the muscles, by which that dimple became now more, now less visible, all that is properly charm lay beyond his power. The poet said all his art could say to make beauty palpable to us, in order that, in imitation of him, the painter also should aim at the highest expression of it in his. It is a fresh example of the observation I made above, that the poet, even when speaking of works of art, is not bound to restrain himself in his description within the limits of art.

CHAPTER XXII.

ZEUXIS painted a Helen, and had the courage to write below the picture those renowned lines of Homer in which the enraptured elders confess their sensations. Never have painting and poetry been engaged in another such contest. The victory remained undecided, and both deserved a crown.

For just as the wise poet showed us the beauty, which he felt he could not paint according to its constituent parts, merely in its effect, so the no less wise painter showed us that beauty by nothing but those parts, and held it unbecoming for his art to have recourse to any other means of help. His picture consisted of a single, nude, standing figure of Helen. For it is probable that it was the same that he painted for the people of Cortona [1]

Let us compare with this, for curiosity's sake, the picture which Caylus sketches for the modern artist from these lines of Homer. "Helen, covered with a white veil, appears in the midst of several old men, Priam among the number, who is recognizable by the emblems of his royal dignity. The artist must especially exert his skill to make us feel the triumph of beauty in the eager glances and in all the expressions of astonished admiration depicted on the countenances of the old men. The scene is over one of the gates of the town. The background of the painting may be lost either in the open sky, or against the higher buildings of the town. The first would be the boldest, but the one would be as suitable as the other."

But let us suppose this picture executed by the first master of our time, and compare it with the work of Zeuxis. Which will show the real triumph of beauty? The latter, in which I feel it itself, or the former, in which I am obliged to gather it from the grimaces of excited greybeards? "Turpe senilis amor!" an expression of eagerness makes the most venerable face ridiculous, and an old man who betrays youthful desires is even a disgusting object. This objection cannot be applied to Homer's elders; for the

[1] Val Maximus, lib III. cap. 7. Dionysius Halicarnass. Art Rhet. cap. 12. Περὶ λογῶν ἐξετάσεως

passion which they feel is but a momentary spark, which their wisdom at once extinguishes; and is intended to conduce to the honour of Helen, but not to put themselves to shame. They confess their feelings, and immediately add—

> ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς τοίη περ ἐοῦσ', ἐν νηυσὶ νεέσθω,
> μηδ' ἡμῖν τεκέεσί τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λίποιτο.

Without this resolution, they would have been old fools; which is, in fact, what they appear in Caylus's picture. And to what is it they are directing their eager glances? To a masked, veiled figure. Is that Helen? It is incomprehensible to me how Caylus could here leave her the veil. It is true Homer expressly gives her one:—

> αὐτίκα δ' ἀργεννῇσι καλυψαμένη ὀθόνῃσιν,
> ὡρμᾶτ' ἐκ θαλάμοιο.

But it was in order to pass along the streets in it; and, even if the elders do express their admiration before she appears to have taken off or thrown back her veil, it was not the first time they had seen her Their confession need not, therefore, arise from the present momentary view of her, but they might have often experienced before the feelings which on this occasion they for the first time acknowledged. In the painting, however, it is nothing of the kind. When I see old men in raptures I naturally expect to see what it is that has produced them; and I am exceedingly surprised if, as before said, I perceive nothing but a masked and veiled figure at which they are fervently gazing How much of Helen is there in this figure? Her white veil, and part of her well-proportioned outline, as far as outline can be visible beneath drapery. But perhaps it was not the intention of the Count that her face should be covered, and he merely mentions the veil as a part of her dress. If this is the case (his words, "Hélène couverte d'un voile blanc," are scarcely capable of such an interpretation), I find another cause for astonishment. He gives the artist the most careful directions about the expression in the faces of the old men; but upon the beauty in the countenance of Helen he does not waste a single word. This demure

beauty, timidly approaching with the glitter of a repentant tear in her eye. What? Is the highest beauty so familiar to our artists that they require no reminding of it? Or is expression more than beauty? And in painting, as upon the stage, does the plainest actress immediately pass for a charming princess if her prince does but make a passionate declaration of love to her?

In truth the painting of Caylus would bear the same relation to that of Zeuxis as pantomime does to the most exalted poetry.

Homer was incontestably more industriously studied by the ancients than by us. Yet one finds no mention of any such great number of pictures for which ancient artists were indebted to him.[2] They appear to have made industrious use of a mere indication on the part of the poet of particular material objects of beauty; these they painted, and fully felt that it was in these objects alone that they were capable of really rivalling the poet.[3] Besides the Helen, Zeuxis had also painted the Penelope; and the Diana of Apelles resembled Homer's in the accompanying train of her nymphs. I will take this occasion to mention that the passage of Pliny, in which this last is spoken of, stands in need of an emendation.[4] The ancient artists do

[2] Fabricii Bibliothec Græc. lib ii. cap. vi. p 345

[3] [That is to say. the ancients must have become fully aware of the general unsuitability of Homer for pictorial illustration, hence they eagerly availed themselves of slight indications of subjects, in the manner that Lessing goes on to exemplify —ED]

[4] Pliny says of Apelles (lib xxxv. sect. 36, 17): "Fecit et Dianam sacrificantium virginum choro mixtam; quibus vicisse Homeri versus videtur id ipsum describentis." Nothing can be more true than this praise. A beautiful goddess, surrounded by beautiful nymphs, and taller than them by the whole of her majestic forehead, is indeed a subject fitter for painting than for poetry The word *sacrificantium* however is, in my opinion, very suspicious What is the goddess doing among sacrificing virgins? Is this the occupation of the companions of Diana in Homer? Not at all, they roam with her over hill and through forest, they hunt, sport, and dance (Odyss vi. 102).—

οἵη δ' Ἄρτεμις εἶσι κατ' οὔρεος ἰοχέαιρα,
ἢ κατὰ Τηΰγετον περιμήκετον ἢ Ἐρύμανθον,
τερπομένη κάπροισι καὶ ὠκείῃς ἐλάφοισι
τῇ δέ θ' ἅμα Νύμφαι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,
ἀγρονόμοι παίζουσι . . . . .

not appear to have had any taste for painting actions taken from Homer, simply because they offer a rich composition, striking contrasts, and artistical chiaroscuro; nor could they have indulged such a taste so long as art restrained itself within the narrow limits of its highest

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Pliny therefore must have written, not *sacrificantium*, but *venantium*, or something like it; perhaps *sylvis vagantium*, to which amendment the number of the letters which have been changed would pretty nearly correspond: *saltantium* would answer most closely to the word *παίζουσι*, which is used by Homer. Virgil, moreover, in his imitation of this passage, speaks of Diana as dancing with her nymphs (Æneid, i. 497):—

"Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi
Exercet Diana choros". . . . . . .

Spence's ideas on this passage are curious (Polymetis, Dial. viii. p 102): "This Diana," he says, "both in the picture and in the descriptions, *was the Diana Venatrix, though she was not represented either by* Virgil, or Apelles, or Homer, as hunting with her nymphs, but as employed with them in that sort of dances which of old were regarded as very solemn acts of devotion" In a note he adds: "The expression of *παίζειν*, used by Homer on this occasion, is scarce proper for hunting; as that of *choros exercere*, in Virgil, should be understood of the religious dances of old, because dancing, in the old Roman idea of it, was indecent, even for men, in public; unless it were the *sort of dances* used in honour of Mars, or Bacchus, or some other of their gods" Spence speaks of those festive dances which were reckoned by the ancients in the number of their religious ceremonies And it is in this sense that he thinks the word *sacrificare* is used by Pliny: "It is in consequence of this that Pliny, in speaking of Diana's nymphs on this very occasion, uses the word *sacrificare* of them, which quite determines these dances of theirs to have been of the religious kind." He forgets that in Virgil Diana herself joins in the dance: "exercet Diana choros" If then this *dance was a religious service, in* whose honour did Diana dance? In her own, or in that of another divinity? Either supposition is ridiculous And even if the ancient Romans considered that dancing in *general* was not very becoming in a serious person, it does not follow that their poets were obliged to transfer this seriousness to the manners of the gods, whose mode of life had been already described and settled by the Greek poets in a very different manner. When Horace says of Venus (Od. iv. lib. i)—

"Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus; imminente luna:
Junctæque Nymphis Gratiæ decentes
Alterno terram quatiunt pede". . . .

is he here also speaking of a holy religious dance? I am wasting too many words upon such a trifle

function. They fed themselves, therefore, upon the spirit of the poet; they filled their imagination with his most exalted features, the flame of his enthusiasm enkindled their own; they saw and felt as he; and so their works bore the stamp of Homer, not as a portrait that of its original, but as a son that of his father; alike, but different The similarity often lies but in one single feature. For the rest have nothing in common, except that in the one, as well as in the other, they harmonize with that one resembling feature.

Besides, since the Homeric masterpieces of poetry were older than any masterpieces of art; since Homer had contemplated nature with an artistic eye before Pheidias and Apelles, it is no wonder that the artists found various observations especially useful to them already made in Homer, while as yet they had had no time to take them from Nature herself. These they eagerly seized upon in order to imitate Nature through Homer. Pheidias acknowledged that the lines—[5]

> ἦ, καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων·
> ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπεῤῥώσαντο ἄνακτος
> κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον

—served him as a model for his Olympian Jupiter, and that it was only by their help that he succeeded in producing a godlike countenance, "propemodum ex ipso cœlo petitum." If any one takes this to mean nothing more than that the imagination of the artist was fired by the exalted image of the poet, and rendered capable of producing equally elevated representations, he seems to me to overlook that which is most essential, and to content himself with drawing a conclusion altogether general where he has it in his power to draw a particular one on far more satisfactory grounds As I judge, Pheidias here confessed that in this passage he first remarked how much expression lies in the eyebrows, "quanta pars animi"[6] shows itself in them. Perhaps it also incited him to bestow more labour upon the hair, in order, in some measure, to express what Homer calls ambrosial locks;

[5] Iliad, i. 528. Valerius Maximus, lib iii. cap vii sect. 4.
[6] Pliny, x 51.

for it is certain that the ancient artists before the time of Pheidias but little understood the language and meaning of the features, and that they had neglected the hair especially. Still, Myron, as Pliny remarks,[7] was censurable in both points; and according to the same authority, Pythagoras Leontinus was the first who distinguished himself by an elegant execution of the hair.[8] What Pheidias learnt from Homer the other artists learnt from the works of Pheidias.

I will quote another example of this kind which has always given me much pleasure. I would recall to my readers the observations which Hogarth has made upon the Apollo Belvedere:[9] "These two masterpieces of art, the Apollo and Antinous, are seen together in the same palace at Rome, where the Antinous fills the spectator with admiration only, whilst the Apollo strikes him with surprise, and, as travellers express themselves, with an appearance of something *more than human*; which they *of course* are always at a loss to describe; and this effect, they say, is the more astonishing, as upon examination its disproportion is evident even to a common eye. One of the best sculptors we have in England, who lately went to see them, confirmed to me what has been now said, particularly as to the legs and thighs being too long and too large for the upper parts. And Andrea Sacchi, one of the great Italian painters, seems to have been of the same opinion, or he would hardly have given his Apollo, crowning Pasquilini the musician, the exact proportion of the Antinous (in a famous picture of his now in England), as otherwise it seems to be a direct copy from the Apollo.

"Although in very great works we often see an inferior part neglected, yet here it cannot be the case, because in a fine statue just proportion is one of its essential beauties; therefore it stands to reason that these limbs

[7] Plinius, lib. xxxiv sect 19, 3: "Ipse tamen corporum tenus curiosus, animi sensus non expressisse videtur, capillum quoque et pubem non emendatius fecisse, quam rudis antiquitas instituisset"

[8] *Ibid* 19, 4: "Hic primus nervos et venas expressit; capillumque diligentius"

[9] Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty, chap. xi.

must have been lengthened on purpose, otherwise it might easily have been avoided.

"So that if we examine the beauties of this figure thoroughly we may reasonably conclude that what has been hitherto thought so unaccountably excellent in its general appearance hath been owing to what hath seemed a *blemish* in a part of it." All this is very evident; and already Homer, I may add, had felt and indicated that there is an exalted appearance, which springs merely from this addition of size in the proportions of the feet and thighs; for when Antenor compares the form of Ulysses with that of Menelaus he is made to say [10]—

> Στάντων μὲν, Μενέλαος ὑπείρεχεν εὐρέας ὤμους,
> ἄμφω δ' ἑζομένω, γεραρώτερος ἦεν Ὀδυσσεύς.

"When both stood, Menelaus towered above the other with his broad shoulders; but when both sat, Ulysses had the nobler presence." Since Ulysses, therefore, gained when sitting what Menelaus lost in that position, it is easy to determine what proportion the upper parts of each bore to their feet and thighs. The former were of a disproportionate size in Ulysses, the latter in Menelaus.



CHAPTER XXIII.

A single unbecoming part may disturb the harmonious operation of many in the direction of beauty without the object necessarily becoming ugly. Even ugliness requires several unbecoming parts, all of which we must be able to take in at the same view before we experience sensations the opposite of those which beauty produces.

According to this, therefore, ugliness in its essence could be no subject of poetry; yet Homer has painted extreme ugliness in Thersites, and this ugliness is described according to its contiguous parts. Why in the case of ugliness did he allow himself a licence from which he had so judiciously abstained in that of beauty? Is

[10] Iliad, iii. 210.

not the effect of ugliness obviated by a successive enumeration of its elements just as much as the effect of beauty is annihilated by a similar enumeration of its elements?

Undoubtedly it is; but it is in this very fact that the justification of Homer lies. The poet can only make use of ugliness so far as it is reduced in his description into a less repugnant appearance of bodily imperfection, and ceases, as it were, in point of its effect to be ugliness. Thus, what he cannot make use of by itself he can as an ingredient for the purpose of producing and strengthening certain mixed sensations with which he must entertain us in default of those purely agreeable.

These mixed feelings are the ridiculous and the horrible.

Homer makes Thersites ugly in order to make him ridiculous. He is not made so, however, merely by his ugliness, for ugliness is an imperfection, and a contrast of perfections with imperfections is required to produce the ridiculous. This is the explanation of my friend,[1] to which I might add, that this contrast must not be too sharp and glaring, and that the contrasts, to continue in the language of the artist, must be of such a kind that they are capable of blending into one another. The wise and virtuous Æsop does not become ridiculous because the ugliness of Thersites has been attributed to him. It was a foolish monkish whim to try to illustrate the γελοῖον in his instructive fables by means of the deformity in his own person. For a misshapen body and a beautiful mind are as oil and vinegar; however much you may shake them together, they always remain distinct to the taste. They will not make a third quality. The body produces annoyance, the soul pleasure; each its own effect. It is only when the deformed body is also fragile and sickly, when it impedes the soul in its operations, and is the occasion of prejudicial judgments concerning it, that annoyance and pleasure melt into one another. The new result is not ridicule, but sympathy; and its object, who without this would only have been esteemed, becomes interesting. The misshapen sickly Pope must have been far more interesting

[1] Philos Schriften des Herrn Moses Mendelssohn, vol ii p. 23. [Lessing formed an intimate friendship with Moses Mendelssohn in Berlin.—ED.]

to his friends than the handsome and healthy Wycherly to his. But while Thersites is not made ridiculous by mere ugliness, he would by no means be so without it. His ugliness, the harmony of this ugliness with his character, the contrast which both form with the idea which he cherishes of his own importance, the harmless effect of his malicious chattering, which is derogatory to himself only, all combine to produce this result. The last circumstance is the *οὐ φθαρτικόν*,[2] which Aristotle considers indispensable to the ridiculous; as my friend makes it also a necessary condition that the contrast should not be of great importance, or inspire us with much interest. For let us only assume that even Thersites paid more dearly than he did for his malicious depreciation of Agamemnon, and atoned for it with his life, instead of a pair of bloody wheals, and we should at once cease to laugh at him. For this horror of a man is still a man, whose annihilation must always appear a greater evil to us than all his defects and vices. In order to experience this, let any one read the account of his end in Quintus Calaber.[3] Achilles is grieved at having slain Penthesileia; the beauty, bathed in her own blood so bravely shed, demands the esteem and compassion of the hero; and esteem and compassion beget love. But the slanderous Thersites imputes this to him as a crime. He grows zealous against the lust which can lead even the most noble of men to madness:—

> ἥτ' ἄφρονα φωτὰ τίθησι
> καὶ πινυτόν περ ἐόντα.

Achilles is angered, and, without adding a word, strikes him so heavily between the cheek and the ear that his teeth and blood and life issue together from his mouth. It is too horrible! The passionate and murderous Achilles becomes more hateful to me than the malicious and snarling Thersites. The shout of applause which the Greeks raised at this offends me. I step to the side of Diomedes, who already draws his sword to avenge his kinsman on the murderer, for I feel that Thersites is my kinsman also, a human being.

[2] De Poetica, cap. v.

[3] Paralipomena, lib. i. 720.

But let us suppose that the instigations of Thersites had resulted in a mutiny, that the rebellious people had really embarked in their ships, and treacherously left their leaders behind them; that these leaders had fallen into the hands of a revengeful enemy, and that thereupon a divine decree of punishment had wreaked utter destruction on the fleet and people. How would the ugliness of Thersites appear then? If ugliness, when harmless, may be ridiculous, when hurtful it is always horrible. I do not know how I can better illustrate this than by citing a couple of excellent passages from Shakespeare. Edmund, the bastard of the Earl of Gloucester, in King Lear, is no less a villain than Richard Duke of Gloucester, who paved his path to the throne by the most horrible crimes, and mounted it under the title of Richard the Third. How is it then that the first excites our loathing and horror so much less than the second? When I hear the bastard say:—[4]

"Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween asleep and awake?"

I am listening to a devil, but see him in the form of an angel of light. When, on the contrary, I hear the Duke of Gloucester:—[5]

"But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;

[4] King Lear, Act i. sc. 2.
[5] King Richard the Third, Act i. sc. 1.

I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty;
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph,
I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable,
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity;
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair, well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain——"

I hear a devil, and I see a devil; and in a form which the devil alone ought to have.



CHAPTER XXIV.

IT is thus that the poet turns ugliness of form to account. What use may the artist be allowed to make of it?

Painting, as an imitative power, can express ugliness; but painting as a fine art refuses to do so: as in the former capacity, all visible objects may be subjects for it, in the latter it is confined to those only by which pleasing sensations are awakened.

But do not even disagreeable sensations become pleasing when imitated? Not all. An acute critic[1] has already made the following remarks upon aversion: "The representations," he says, "of fear, sorrow, alarm, compassion, &c., can only so far awaken dislike as we believe the evil to be real. These therefore might, through the recollection that it is nothing but an artificial illusion, dissolve into sensations of pleasure. But the disagreeable sensation of disgust follows, on the mere representation in the soul, by virtue of the law of our imagination, whether the

[1] Briefe die neueste Lit. betreffend, vol. v. p. 102.

object be considered real or not. What consolation is it to the offended mind, even if the artificiality of the imitation is ever so obvious? Its aversion arose, not from the presumption that the evil was real, but from the mere representation of it, and that is real. The feelings of disgust, therefore, are always real, and never imitations.

All this is equally applicable to ugliness of form. This ugliness offends our sight, contradicts our taste for arrangement and harmony, and awakens disgust, without any reference to the actual existence of the object in which we perceive it. We had rather not see Thersites either in nature or in a picture; and if the picture should be the least displeasing of the two, this does not result from the ugliness of his form ceasing to be such an imitation, but from our possessing the power of withdrawing attention from this ugliness, and deriving pleasure exclusively from the art of the painter. But even this pleasure will every moment be interrupted by the reflexion to what a bad purpose the art has been applied, and this reflexion seldom fails to convey with it disparagement of the artist.

Aristotle adduces another reason[2] why objects which we view with displeasure in nature may impart enjoyment, even when most faithfully represented, viz. the general thirst for knowledge among men. We are pleased when we can learn from the imitation, *τί ἕκαστον*, what each thing is, or when we can conclude from it *ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος*, that it represents this thing or that, but no inference can be drawn from this in favour of ugliness in the imitation. The pleasure which arises from the satisfaction of our thirst for knowledge is momentary, and merely accidental to the object which affords it, while the feeling of annoyance which accompanies the sight of ugliness is permanent, and essential to the object which awakens it. How then can this latter be counterbalanced by the former? Still less can the trifling degree of pleasurable interest afforded by the similitude overcome the displeasing effect of the ugliness. The more closely I compare the ugly picture with the ugly original, the more I expose myself to this effect, so that the pleasure of comparison presently

[2] De Poetica, cap. iv.

vanishes, and nothing remains to me but the disagreeable impression of the double ugliness. To judge from the examples which Aristotle gives us, it appears that he had no intention of classing simple ugliness of form among those displeasing objects which are capable of affording pleasure when imitated. These examples are wild beasts and corpses. Wild beasts awaken terror, although they are not ugly, and it is this terror, and not their ugliness, which by imitation is resolved into pleasurable sensations. So too it is with corpses. It is the acuter feelings of pity and the terrible thought of our own annihilation that renders a corpse a repulsive object to us in nature; but in the imitation this pity loses its poignancy through our consciousness of illusion, and an addition of soothing circumstances may either entirely withdraw our thoughts from this fatal recollection, or unite itself so inseparably with it that we believe we can see therein more to desire than to shrink from.

Ugliness of form, then, cannot in and for itself be a subject for painting as a fine art, for the sensation which it excites is not only displeasing, but is not even of that class of unpleasing sensations which, when imitated, are changed into the pleasurable. Still it remains a question whether, as an ingredient for strengthening sensations, it may not be serviceable to art as well as to poetry?

May painting, to attain the ridiculous and the horrible, make use of ugly forms?

I will not venture to answer directly in the negative. It is undeniable that harmless ugliness can be made ridiculous in painting also, especially if an affected assumption of charm and beauty is combined with it, but it is just as indisputable that harmful ugliness excites the same horror in painting as in nature, and that the ridiculous and the horrible, both of which are in themselves mixed sensations, attain by imitation, the former a higher degree of attraction, the latter of offensiveness

I must, however, call attention to the fact that in spite of this, painting and poetry do not stand in precisely the same position. In poetry, as I observed, ugliness of form, through its parts being changed from coexisting into successive, almost entirely loses its repulsive effect; from

this point of view, it ceases as it were to be ugliness, and can therefore the more implicitly combine with other appearances to produce a new and peculiar effect. In painting, on the contrary, the ugliness exerts all its powers at once, and affects us but little less deeply than in nature. Harmless ugliness, consequently, cannot long remain ridiculous; the unpleasant sensation gains the upper hand, and what at first was comic becomes in the course of time simply repulsive. It is just the same with hurtful ugliness; the horrible disappears by degrees, and deformity is left behind alone and unchangeable

On these considerations Count Caylus was perfectly right in omitting the episode of Thersites in his series of Homeric paintings, but are we therefore justified in wishing that it had been left out of Homer itself? I am sorry to find that a scholar of otherwise just and refined taste is of this opinion,[3] but I reserve for another opportunity the fuller explanation of my views upon this point.



CHAPTER XXV.

THE second distinction, which the critic I have just quoted draws between disgust and the other disagreeable passions of the soul, is also shown by the displeasure which ugliness of form excites in us.

"Other disagreeable passions," he says,[1] "may, even in nature, setting aside imitation, find frequent opportunities of flattering the mind: because they never excite pure aversion, but always temper their bitterness with gratification. Our fear is seldom deprived of all hope. Terror animates all our powers, to escape from the danger: anger is commingled with the desire of revenge, and sorrow with the soothing recollection of former happiness; while compassion is inseparable from the tender feelings of love and affection. The soul has the liberty of dwelling at one time upon the pleasing, at another upon the repulsive, parts of a passion, and of creating for itself a mixture of

[3] Klotzii Epistolæ Homericæ, p. 33

[1] *Ibid.* p. 103

pleasure and sorrow which is far more seductive than the purest gratification. It requires but little attention to the workings of our own mind to have observed this times without number. Whence comes it else, that to the angry man his anger, and to the sorrowing his sorrow, are dearer than all the cheerful representations with which we think to calm him? But it is very different in the case of disgust and the feelings allied to it. In these the soul recognizes no admixture of pleasure. Dissatisfaction gains the upper hand, and it is impossible to think of any situation, either in nature or in imitation, in which the mind would not shrink with abhorrence from representations of them."

Perfectly true; but since the critic himself acknowledges that there are sensations allied to disgust, which likewise can produce nothing but annoyance; what, I ask, can be more closely allied to it than the perception of ugliness in form? This too in nature is without the smallest admixture of pleasure; and since it is equally incapable of admitting any through imitation, it is likewise impossible to conceive any condition of it in which the mind would not shrink from it with abhorrence.

This repugnance, if I have investigated my own feelings with sufficient care, is altogether of the nature of disgust. The sensation which is excited by ugliness of form is disgust, only in a lower degree. This, I allow, is at variance with another remark of the critic, from which it would appear that he considers that only the less acute of our senses, taste, smell, and touch, are exposed to disgust. "The two first," he says, "through an excessive sweetness; and the last through the oversoftness of any matter which does not afford sufficient resistance to the nerves which touch it. These objects then become intolerable to the sight also, but only through the association of ideas, and our recollection of the repugnance which our taste, smell, and feeling experienced at them; for, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an object of disgust to the sight" Still it appears to me that instances of this last might be named. A liver spot in the face, a hare-lip, a flattened nose with prominent nostrils, an entire want of eyebrows, are uglinesses which are repugnant neither to the smell nor taste nor touch, yet

it is certain that there is a sensation experienced at them which approaches much more closely to disgust than any which is produced by other deformities of body, such as a crooked-foot or a high shoulder; and the more delicate the temperament, the more will those sensations which precede nausea be felt at the sight of them; these, however, quickly subside, and it is rarely that actual nausea follows, the reason for which may certainly be found in this, that, being objects of sight, sight perceives in them and with them a number of realities, through the agreeable representations of which the disagreeable ones are so weakened and obscured that they can rarely produce any traceable influence upon the body. Our less acute senses, on the contrary, the taste, smell, and touch, cannot observe such realities, whilst they are affected with what is repulsive; this, consequently, is left to work alone, and in its full strength, and is naturally therefore accompanied by a far more violent bodily effect.

Besides, the disgusting stands on just the same footing as to imitation as the ugly. Nay, since its unpleasant effects are more violent, it is still less capable than the latter of becoming, in and by itself, a subject either of poetry or painting. Only because it is greatly softened by being expressed in words should I venture to assert that the poet can employ at least a few disgusting traits as an ingredient to produce the same mixed sensations which he so successfully strengthens by the use of ugliness

The disgusting can increase the ridiculous; or representations of propriety and dignity may be rendered laughable by being placed in close contrast with it Numerous examples of this may be found in Aristophanes One that occurs to me is the weasel, which interrupted the good Sokrates in his astronomical contemplations [1]

ΜΑΘ. πρώην δέ γε γνώμην μεγάλην ἀφῃρέθη
ὑπ' ἀσκαλαβώτου. ΣΤΡ. τίνα τρόπον; κάτειπέ μοι.
ΜΑΘ. ζητοῦντος αὐτοῦ τῆς σελήνης τὰς ὅδους
καὶ τὰς περιφοράς, εἶτ' ἄνω κεχηνότος
ἀπὸ τῆς ὀροφῆς νύκτωρ γαλεώτης κατέχεσεν.
ΣΤΡ. ἥσθην γαλεώτῃ καταχέσαντι Σωκράτους.

[1] Nubes, 170.

If we suppose that what fell into his open mouth was not disgusting, the ridiculous disappears altogether. The most comic traits of this kind are to be found in the Hottentot history of Tquassouw and Knonmquaiha, which appeared in the 'Connoisseur,' an English weekly periodical, abounding in humour, ascribed to Lord Chesterfield. We all know how dirty the Hottentots are, and how many things are esteemed beautiful, becoming, and holy among them which excite disgust and loathing in us. Let us picture to ourselves the cartilage of the nose flattened, breasts flaccidly descending to the navel, the whole body glistening in the sun with an ointment of goat's fat and soot, the hair dripping with grease, the feet and arms entwined with fresh entrails. Let us think of all this as the object of a fervent, venerating, tender love; let us hear the passion expressed in the noble language of seriousness and admiration, and refrain from laughing if we can.[3]

With the terrible the disgusting seems capable of being

[3] The Connoisseur, vol i No 21 It is entitled "A description of the beauty of Knonmquaiha." "He was struck with the glossy hue of her complexion, which shone like the jetty down on the black hogs of Hessaqua, he was ravished with the prest gristle of her nose; and his eyes dwelt with admiration on the flaccid beauties of her breasts, which descended to her navel" And what does art contribute to set so much beauty in its most advantageous light? "She made a varnish of the fat of goats mixed with soot, with which she anointed her whole body, as she stood beneath the rays of the sun, her locks were clotted with melted grease and powdered with the yellow dust of Buchu her face, which shone like the polished ebony, was beautifully varied with spots of red earth, and appeared like the sable curtain of the night bespangled with stars: she sprinkled her limbs with wood-ashes, and perfumed them with the dung of Stinkbingsem. Her arms and legs were entwined with the shining entrails of an heifer: from her neck there hung a pouch composed of the stomach of a kid: the wings of an ostrich overshadowed the fleshy promontories behind, and before she wore an apron formed of the shaggy ears of a lion." I will add the ceremony of the nuptials of the enamoured pair "The Surri, or chief priest, approached them and in a deep voice chanted the nuptial rites to the melodious grumbling of the gom-gom, and at the same time (according to the manner of Caffraria) bedewed them plentifully with the urinary benediction. The bride and bridegroom rubbed in the precious stream with ecstasy, while the briny drops trickled from their bodies, like the oozy surge from the rocks of Chirigriqua."

associated more closely still. What we call the horrible is nothing more than the terrible rendered disgusting. Longinus[4] indeed is offended with the Τῆς ἐκ μὲν ῥινῶν μύξαι ῥέον in Hesiod's[5] picture of Sorrow; not so much, I think, because it is a disgusting trait as because it is one simply so, and does not in any way contribute to the terrible; for he appears to raise no objections against the long nails, projecting beyond the fingers (μακροὶ δ' ὄνυχες χείρεσσιν ὑπῆσαν): and yet long nails are at least as disgusting as a dirty nose; but they are also terrible; for it is they which tear the cheeks, till the blood streams from them to the ground.—

> . . . . . ἐκ δὲ παρειῶν
> αἷμ' ἀπελείβετ' ἔραζε . . .

On the other hand a dirty nose is nothing but a dirty nose, and I can only recommend Sorrow to keep her mouth shut. Let the reader turn to the description of the desolate cave of the unfortunate Philoktetes in Sophokles. None of the necessaries and conveniences of life are to be seen, except a bed of trampled dry leaves, a shapeless wooden bowl, and the means of lighting a fire, the whole wealth of the sick and deserted man. How does the poet complete this sorrowful and fearful picture? He adds a touch of disgust.[6] "Ha!" and Neoptolemus all at once shrinks; "look at these torn rags full of blood and matter drying here."

> ΝΕ. ὁρῶ κενὴν οἴκησιν ἀνθρώπων δίχα.
> ΟΔ. οὐδ' ἔνδον οἰκοποιός ἐστί τις τροφή;
> ΝΕ. στειπτή γε φυλλὰς ὡς ἐναυλίζοντί τῳ.
> ΟΔ. τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔρημα, κοὐδέν ἐσθ' ὑπόστεγον;
> ΝΕ. αὐτόξυλόν γ' ἔκπωμα, φαυλουργοῦ τινος
> τεχνήματ' ἀνδρὸς, καὶ πυρεῖ' ὁμοῦ τάδε.
> ΟΔ. κείνου τὸ θησαύρισμα σημαίνεις τόδε·
> ΝΕ. ἰοὺ! ἰού! καὶ ταῦτά γ' ἄλλα θάλπεται
> ῥάκη, βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα.

[4] Περὶ Ὕψους, τμῆμα η'. p 15. Edit. T Fabri.
[5] Scut. Hercul. 266.
[6] Philoct. 31.

So too in Homer: Hektor, when dragged along, his face disfigured with blood and dust, and his hair matted—

> "Squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crines"

(as Virgil expresses it),[7] becomes a disgusting object, but for that very reason more horrible and moving. Who can think of the punishment of Marsyas, in Ovid, without a sensation of disgust?[8]

> "Clamanti cutis est summos direpta per artus:
> Nec quidquam nisi vulnus erat; cruor undique manat.
> Detectique patent nervi. trepidæque sine ulla
> Pelle micant venæ: salientia viscera possis
> Et perlucentes numerare in pectore fibras."

We all feel, however, that the disgusting is here in its proper place. It renders the terrible horrible; and the horrible is not altogether displeasing even in nature, if our compassion is thereby interested: how much less then in imitation? I will not multiply instances; yet I must observe that there is one species of the horrible to which the poet has hardly any other means of access than the disgusting. It is the horrors of hunger. Even in common life we can only express the direst stress of starvation by an enumeration of all the innutritious, unwholesome, and particularly disgusting things with which the stomach must needs be satisfied; since imitation cannot excite in us any actual sensation of hunger, it has recourse to another unpleasant feeling, which, in the case of extreme starvation we recognize as the lighter evil. This sensation it seeks to awaken in us, that we may conclude, from our aversion to it, how strong that aversion must be, under the influence of which we would be glad to set at naught the present one. Ovid says of the Oread whom Ceres sent to meet Famine[9]—

> "Hanc (Famem) procul ut vidit . . .
> . refert mandata deæ; paulumque morata,
> Quanquam aberat longe, quanquam modo venerat illuc,
> Visa tamen sensisse famem."

[7] Æneid, lib ii 277 [8] Metamorph. vi. 397.
[9] Ibid viii 809

This is an unnatural exaggeration. The sight of a famishing person, even though it be Famine herself, does not possess this infectious power; pity and horror and disgust it might awaken, but not hunger. Ovid has not been sparing of this horror in his picture of Fames; and in his description of Erysichthon's starvation, as well as in that of Kallimachus,[10] the disgusting traits are the strongest. After Erysichthon has consumed everything, and has not spared even the sacrificial cow which his mother had reared for Vesta, Kallimachus represents him as falling upon the horses and cats, and begging in the streets for the fragments and filthy relics from strangers' tables.—

> *καὶ τὰν βῶν ἔφαγεν, τὰν Ἑστίᾳ ἔτρεφε μάτηρ,*
> *καὶ τὸν ἀεθλοφόρον καὶ τὸν πολεμήιον ἵππον,*
> *καὶ τὰν αἴλουρον, τὰν ἔτρεμε θήρια μικκά—*
> *καὶ τόθ' ὁ τῶ βασιλῆος ἐνὶ τριόδοισι καθῆστο*
> *αἰτίζων ἀκόλως τε καὶ ἔκβολα λύματα δαιτός.*

And Ovid makes him at last fix his teeth in his own limbs, that from his own body he might obtain nourishment for itself:—

> "Vis tamen illa mali postquam consumpserat omnem
> Materiam . . . .
> Ipse suos artus lacero divellere morsu
> Cœpit, et infelix minuendo corpus alebat."

The only reason that the harpies were represented as so noisome and disgusting was that the hunger caused by their carrying off the provisions might appear more horrible. Let us listen to the complaint of Phineus, in Apollonius:—[11]

> *τυτθὸν δ' ἢν ἄρα δή ποτ' ἐδητύος ἄμμι λίπωσι,*
> *πνεῖ τόδε μυδαλέον τε καὶ οὐ τλητὸν μένος ὀδμῆς.*
> *οὔ κέ τις οὐδὲ μίνυνθα βρότων ἄνσχοιτο πελάσσας,*
> *οὐδ' εἰ οἱ ἀδάμαντος ἐληλαμένον κέαρ εἴη.*
> *ἀλλά με πικρὴ δῆτά κε δαιτὸς ἐπίσχει ἀνάγκη*
> *μίμνειν, και μίμνοντα κακῇ ἐν γαστέρι θέσθαι.*

[10] Hym. in Cererem, 111. [11] Argonaut. lib. ii. 228.

I should be glad to justify from this point of view the disgusting introduction of the harpies in Virgil; but the hunger there spoken of is not an actual and present famine which they occasion, but only an impending one which they foretell; and, to crown all, the whole prophesy finds its fulfilment in a mere verbal equivocation. Dante, too, not only prepares us for the story of the starvation of Ugolino, by placing him and his former persecutors in the most loathsome and horrible situation in hell; but also the account of the starvation itself is not without some features awakening disgust, which especially seizes us when the sons offer themselves to their father as food. In the note I quote a passage from a play of Beaumont and Fletcher, which might have served instead of all other examples, did I not feel obliged to acknowledge that it is somewhat exaggerated.[12]

[12] The Sea Voyage, Act iii sc 1. [It is by Fletcher only. ED] A French pirate is driven with his ship upon a desert island. Avarice and envy produce a quarrel among his crew. This affords a few poor creatures who had been exposed for some time to the utmost distress upon the island an opportunity of putting out to sea in the vessel. The other wretches are thus suddenly deprived of all the necessities of life, and have no prospect before them but a cruel death One of them expresses his hunger and despair to his fellow as follows.—

"LAMURE. Oh, what a tempest have I in my stomach!
How my empty guts cry out! My wounds ache,
Would they would bleed again, that I might get
Something to quench my thirst
FRANVILLE O Lamure, the happiness my dogs had
When I kept house at home! They had a storehouse,
A storehouse of most blessed bones and crusts,
Happy crusts Oh, how sharp hunger pinches me! . . .
LAMURE How now, what news?
MORILLAR Hast any meat yet?
FRANVILLE Not a bit that I can see;
Here be goodly quarries, but they be cruel hard
To gnaw:
I ha' got some mud, it we will eat with spoons,
Very good thick mud; but it stinks damnably;
There's old rotten trunks of trees too,
But not a leaf nor blossom in all the island.
LAMURE How it looks!
MORILLAR It stinks too
LAMURE. It may be poison.

I now come to disgusting objects in painting. Even if it were altogether indisputable that there is strictly speaking no such thing as an object disgusting to the sight which, as a matter of course, painting, as a fine art, would renounce, it would still be compelled altogether to avoid disgusting objects, because the association of ideas renders them disgusting to the sight also. Pordenone, in

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FRANVILLE Let it be anything,
So I can get it down Why man,
Poison's a princely dish
MORILLAR Hast thou no bisket?
No crumbs left in thy pocket? Here is my doublet,
Give me but three small crumbs
FRANVILLE Not for three kingdoms,
If I were master of 'em O Lamure,
But one poor joint of mutton we ha' scorned, man.
LAMURE Thou speak'st of Paradise,
Or but the snuffs of those healths
We have lewdly at midnight flung away
MORILLAR Ah! but to lick the glasses"

But this is nothing to the next scene, when the ship's surgeon enters

"FRANVILLE. Here comes the surgeon What hast thou discovered?
Smile, smile, and comfort us
SURGEON I am expiring,
Smile they that can I can find nothing, gentlemen;
Here's nothing can be meat, without a miracle
Oh that I had my boxes and my lints now,
My stupes, my tents, and those sweet helps of nature,
What dainty dishes could I make of 'em.
MORILLAR. Hast ne'er an old suppository?
SURGEON Oh, would I had, sir
LAMURE Or but the paper where such a cordial,
Potion, or pills, hath been entomb'd?
FRANVILLE. Or the blest bladder, where a cooling-glister—
MORILLAR Hast thou no searcloths left? Nor any old poultice?
FRANVILLE We care not to what it hath been ministered
SURGEON. Sure I have none of these dainties, gentlemen.
FRANVILLE Where's the great wen
Thou cut'st from Hugh the sailor's shoulder?
That would serve now for a most princely banquet.
SURGEON Ay, if we had it, gentlemen.
I flung it overboard, slave that I was.
LAMURE. A most improvident villain."

a painting of the burial of Christ, represents one of the bystanders as compressing his nose. Richardson[13] disapproves of this upon the ground that Christ had not yet been dead long enough for his body to have passed into corruption. At the resurrection of Lazarus, on the contrary, he is of opinion that an artist might be permitted to draw some of the spectators in this attitude, because history expressly affirms that his body already stank. To me such a representation would there also be intolerable, because it is not only actual stench, but the very idea of it, that awakens disgust. We avoid stinking places even if we have a cold in the head. But, it will be replied, painting requires the disgusting, not for its own sake, but as poetry, to strengthen thereby the ridiculous and the horrible. At its peril! But what I have remarked of the ugly, in respect to this, holds good so much the more of the disgusting. It loses incomparably less of its effect in an imitation which appeals to the eyes than in one which appeals to the ears. In the former, therefore, it cannot become so closely mixed up with the constituent parts of the ridiculous and the horrible as in the latter; as soon as our first surprise is over, and our first eager look satisfied, it again becomes altogether distinct, and stands before us in its original crude form.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HERR WINCKELMANN'S 'History of Ancient Art' has appeared, and I cannot venture a step further before I have read it. To subtilize upon art merely from general ideas may lead us astray into whimsical theories, which sooner or later we find, to our shame, are contradicted in the works of art. The ancients also well knew the ties by which painting and poetry are bound together, and it will be found that they have never drawn them more tightly than was advantageous for each. What their artists did will teach me what artists generally should do, and

[13] Richardson, De la Peinture, t. i. p. 74.

some have done, the exact Olympiad in which these artists flourished."

In a note he adds: "Pliny does not mention the age in which Agesander and his assistants in his work lived; but Maffei, in his explanation of ancient statues, takes it for certain that these artists flourished in the 88th Olympiad; and Richardson and others have copied this statement, on his authority. The former has, I think, mistaken an Athenodorus among the pupils of Polykletus for one of the artists in question, and, since Polykletus flourished in the eighty-seventh, he has placed his assumed scholar an Olympiad later: Maffei could have had no other grounds."

He certainly could not have had any other. But why is Winckelmann satisfied with merely quoting this supposed reason of Maffei? Does it contradict itself? Not entirely. Although it is corroborated by no other evidence, yet it makes for itself a slight amount of probability, unless there is some evidence to prove that it is impossible that Athenodorus, the pupil of Polykletus, and Athenodorus, the associate of Agesander, can have been one and the same person. Fortunately this can be shown, and that too by their different countries. The first Athenodorus came, according to the express testimony of Pausanias,[3] from Kleitor in Arcadia, while the second, on the authority of Pliny, was a native of Rhodes.

Winckelmann can have had no object for wishing that Maffei's assumption should not be incontrovertibly disproved by the production of this circumstance. It must rather be that the grounds which, with his undeniable insight, he derives from the art displayed in the work, have appeared to him of such importance that it matters little whether the opinion of Maffei still retains some probability or not. He recognises without doubt in the Laokoon too many of those "argutiæ"[4] which were peculiar to Lysippus, and with which he was the first to enrich art, to conceive it possible that it should be the production of an age preceding his.

[3] Ἀθηνόδωρος δὲ καὶ Δαμίας . . . οὗτοι δὲ Ἀρκάδες εἰσὶν ἐκ Κλειτόρος. Phoc. cap. ix. p. 819, edit. Kühn.

[4] Plinius, lib. xxxiv. sect. 19, 6.

But supposing it proved that the Laokoon cannot be of greater antiquity than the age of Lysippus, does it necessarily follow that it must belong to about that period, or that it is impossible it should be the work of a far later age? To pass over the time preceding the establishment of the Roman monarchy, during which art in Greece now lifted and now drooped its head, why may not the Laokoon have been the happy fruit of that rivalry which the lavish magnificence of the first Cæsars must have enkindled among the artists? Why cannot Agesander and his helpmates have been contemporaries of a Strongylion, an Archesilaus, a Pasiteles, a Posidonius, or a Diogenes? Were not some of the works of these masters also valued as highly as any that art had ever produced? Let us suppose that pieces, unquestionably theirs, were still extant, but that the age of their sculptors was unknown, and could only be inferred from their style of art; would not an inspiration almost divine be required to guard the critic against a belief that he ought to attribute them also to that age which alone Winckelmann deems capable of having produced the Laokoon?

It is true that Pliny does not expressly state the time at which the artists of the Laokoon flourished. Still, if I were to draw any inference from the connexion of the whole passage, as to whether he intended to rank them among the ancient or modern artists, I confess that the probability seems to me to be in favour of the latter supposition; but let the reader judge for himself.

After Pliny has spoken, somewhat at length, of the most ancient and greatest masters in sculpture, Pheidias, Praxiteles, and Skopas; and has afterwards given, without any chronological order, the names of the rest, and especially of those, any of whose works were still extant at Rome, he continues as follows.[5] "Nec multo plurium fama est, quorundam claritati in operibus eximiis obstante numero artificum, quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt, sicut in Laocoonte, qui est in Titi imperatoris domo, opus omnibus et picturæ et

[5] Lib. xxxvi. 4, 11.

statuariæ artis præponendum. Ex uno lapide eum et liberos draconumque mirabiles nexus de consilii sententia fecere summi artifices, Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii. *Similiter* Palatinas domus Cæsarum replevere probatissimis signis Craterus cum Pythodoro, Polydectes cum Hermolao, Pythodorus alius cum Artemone, et singularis Aphrodisius Trallianus. Agrippæ Pantheum decoravit Diogenes Atheniensis; et Caryatides in columnis templi ejus probantur inter pauca operum: sicut in fastigio posita signa, sed propter altitudinem loci minus celebrata."

Of all the artists mentioned in this passage, Diogenes of Athens is the only one whose era is incontestably determined. He decorated the Pantheon of Agrippa, and must therefore have lived during the reign of Augustus. Still, if we weigh the words of Pliny a little more closely, I think we shall find that the age of Craterus and Pythodorus, of Polydectes and Hermolaus, of the second Pythodorus and Artemon, as well as of Aphrodisius of Tralles, are just as unquestionably settled. He says of them, "Palatinas domus Cæsarum replevere probatissimis signis." Now, I ask, is it possible this should only mean that the palaces of the Cæsars were filled with their masterpieces; in the sense, namely, that the Cæsars had had them collected everywhere, transported to Rome, and placed in their palaces? Certainly not. But they must have executed their statues expressly for these palaces of the Cæsars, and they must have flourished during their time. That they were later artists, whose labours were confined to Italy, may be clearly inferred from the fact that we find no mention of them elsewhere Had they laboured in Greece in early times, Pausanias would have seen one or other of their works, and have preserved their memory for us A Pythodorus, to be sure, does occur in him,[6] but Hardouin is quite wrong in taking him for the same as that mentioned in the above-quoted passage of Pliny, for Pausanias calls one of his pieces, a statue of Juno which he saw at Koronæa in Bœotia, ἄγαλμα ἀρχαῖον, an epithet he only applies to the works of those masters who had flourished

[6] Bœotic. cap xxxiv. p 778. Edit. Kuhn.

in the most ancient and rudest days of art, long before Pheidias and Praxiteles. With works of this kind we may be quite sure the Cæsars did not decorate their palaces. Still less attention can be paid to another conjecture of Hardouin, that Artemon is perhaps the painter of the same name whom Pliny mentions in another place. Identity of names affords but a very poor degree of probability for the sake of which we are far from being entitled to do violence to the natural interpretation of an uncorrupt passage.

According to this there is no doubt that Craterus and Pythodorus, Polydectes and Hermolaus, &c., lived under the Cæsars, whose palaces they filled with their remarkable works, and it seems to me that no other age can be reasonably assigned to those artists from whom Pliny passes on to the others by a "similiter." Now these are the sculptors of the Laokoon. Let my reader only reflect, supposing Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus were as old masters as Winckelmann believes them to be, how unnatural it would appear for an author, in whom accuracy of expression is of considerable importance, when he is forced to pass abruptly from them to the most modern artists to make this transition by means of an "In like manner."

Still it will be answered that this "similiter" does not refer to a connexion in respect of age, but to another circumstance which these artists, so different in point of antiquity, possessed in common. Pliny, it will be said, is speaking of those artists who executed works together, and on account of this association remained less celebrated than they deserved to be. For since no one alone can lay claim to the honour of a work executed in common, and always to mention by name every one who took part in it would have been too tedious ("quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt"), their united names became neglected. This was the lot of the sculptors of the Laokoon, and of so many other artists whom the Cæsars employed in the decoration of their palaces.

I grant all this, but still even then it is in the highest degree probable that Pliny is speaking only of modern artists who worked in conjunction. For if he were alluding to the more ancient, why did he only mention the

sculptors of the Laokoon? Why not others also? Onatas and Kalliteles? Timokles and Timarchides? or the sons of this Timarchides: there was a Jupiter,[7] the joint production of these last, in Rome. Herr Winckelmann himself says that a long list might be given of ancient works which had more than one father,[8] and would Pliny have only recollected Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, if he had not expressly confined himself to the latest times?

If the probability of a supposition increases in proportion to the number and difficulty of the incomprehensible circumstances which are explained by it, the assumption that the sculptors of Laokoon flourished under the first Cæsars is in a very high degree confirmed; for if they had laboured in Greece at the period to which Winckelmann attributes them, if the Laokoon itself had formerly been in that country, the silence observed by the Greeks upon such a work ("opere omnibus et picturæ et statuariæ artis præponendo") would be exceedingly strange. It would surprise us that such great masters should have executed nothing else, or that Pausanias had been able to see as little of the rest of their works in Greece as he did of the Laokoon. In Rome, on the contrary, the great masterpiece might long remain in obscurity, and, even if it were executed as early as the time of Augustus, there would be nothing wonderful in Pliny's having been the first and only man to mention it. Let us only call to mind what he says of a Venus by Skopas[9] which stood at Rome in a temple of Mars; . . . "quemcumque alium locum nobilitatura. Romæ quidem magnitudo operum eam obliterat, ac magni officiorum negotiorumque acervi omnes a contemplatione talium abducunt: quoniam otiosorum et in magno loci silentio apta admiratio talis est."

Those who are desirous of recognizing in the group of the Laokoon an imitation of Virgil's description will accept the remarks I have made hitherto with satisfaction. Another conjecture might occur to me which likewise ought not to call forth much disapproval from them. It was very likely, they might think, Asinius Pollio who had Virgil's Laokoon executed by Greek artists. Pollio was a

[7] Plinius, xxxvi. 4, 10. [8] Gesch. der Kunst, vol. ii. p. 331.
[9] Plinius, xxxvi. 4, 8.

particular friend of the poet, outlived him, and appears even to have composed a work of his own upon the Æneid, for where else could the isolated remarks which Servius quotes from him[10] have found a place so easily as in a work of his own upon this poem. At the same time Pollio was an amateur and connoisseur of art, possessed a rich collection of the most excellent antique works of art, and commissioned the artists of his day to execute new ones for him, and so bold a group as the Laokoon was in perfect accordance with the taste which he displayed in his selection.[11] "ut fuit acris vehementiæ sic quoque spectari monumenta sua voluit." Still, as the cabinet of Pollio at the time of Pliny, when the Laokoon stood in the palace of Titus, appears to have been still quite undivided in a place especially allotted to it, this supposition must again lose a good deal of its probability. And, after all, I do not see why Titus himself should not have done what we would ascribe to Pollio.



CHAPTER XXVII.

I AM confirmed in my opinion, that the sculptors of the Laokoon worked under the first Cæsars, or at any rate cannot be of such antiquity as Herr Winckelmann believes, by a small piece of information which he himself is the first to make known. It is this:—[1]

"At Nettuno, formerly Antium, Cardinal Alexander Albani, in the year 1717, discovered in a great vault, which lay covered by the sea, a vase of greyish black marble, now called bigio, in which the group was inlaid; upon it was the following inscription:—

ΑΘΑΝΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΑΓΗΣΑΝΔΡΟΥ
ΡΟΔΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ.

'ATHANODORUS THE SON OF AGESANDER, OF RHODES, MADE IT.' We gather from this inscription that father and son

[10] Æneid, lib. ii. v. 7, and more particularly lib. xi. 183. Such a work therefore might safely be added to the catalogue of this man's lost writings.

[11] Plinius, xxxvi. 4, 10.

[1] Gesch. der Kunst, part ii. p. 347.

executed the Laokoon, and probably Apollodorus (Polydorus) was also a son of Agesander; for this Athanodorus can be no other than the one mentioned by Pliny. This inscription further proves that more works of art than three only, as Pliny says, have been found, on which the artists have inscribed the word *made* in the perfect and definite tense; ἐποίησε, fecit: he informs us that all the rest out of modesty expressed it in the indefinite, ἐποίει, faciebat"

Herr Winckelmann will find few to gainsay his assertion that the Athanodorus in this inscription can be no other than the Athenodorus mentioned by Pliny amongst the sculptors of the Laokoon. Athanodorus and Athenodorus are doubtless the same name; for the Rhodians spoke the Doric dialect But upon the other conclusions which he draws from this inscription I must make a few remarks.

His first inference, that Athenodorus was a son of Agesander, may pass. It is very probable, but not indisputable; for it is well known that there were ancient artists who abandoned the name of their father, and adopted that of their master. What Pliny says of the brothers Apollonius and Tauriscus hardly admits of any other interpretation.[2]

But how! This inscription is to refute the assertion of Pliny, that not more than three works of art were to be found on which the artists had acknowledged their productions in a perfect tense (by ἐποίησε instead of ἐποίει)? This inscription? Why should we first learn from this inscription what we might have long ago learnt from many others? Had not Κλεομένης ἐποίησε been already found upon the statue of Germanicus? Ἀρχέλαος ἐποίησε upon the so-called deification of Homer? And Σαλπίων ἐποίησε upon the famous vase at Gaeta?[3]

Herr Winckelmann can truly say, "Who knows this better than I? but," he will also add, "so much the worse for Pliny; the oftener his assertion is contradicted, the more undeniably it is refuted."

[2] Lib xxxvi 4, 10

[3] See the list of inscriptions on ancient works of art, in Mar. Gudius (ad Phædri fab v. lib. 1), and cf. at the same time Gronovius's correction of this passage (Præf. ad tom. ix. Thesauri Antiq. Græc.)

Stay. What if Herr Winckelmann makes Pliny say more than he really means? and if thus the examples I adduced refute, not the assertion of Pliny, but merely the addition which Herr Winckelmann has made to this assertion? And this is really the case. I must quote the whole passage. Pliny, in his dedication to Titus, wishes to speak of his work with the modesty of a man who himself best knows how far it still falls short of perfection He discovers a remarkable example of such modesty among the Greeks, the boastful promises of whose title-pages ("inscriptiones, propter quas vadimonium deseri possit") he has been criticizing somewhat; and goes on to say:[4] "Et ne in totum videar Græcos insectari, ex illis nos velim intelligi pingendi fingendique conditoribus, quos in libellis his invenies, absoluta opera, et illa quoque quæ mirando non satiamur, pendenti titulo inscripsisse: ut APELLES FACIEBAT, aut POLYCLITUS tanquam inchoata semper arte et imperfecta: ut contra judiciorum varietates superesset artifici regressus ad veniam, velut emendaturo quidquid desideraretur, si non esset interceptus. Quare plenum verecundiæ illud est, quod omnia opera tanquam novissima inscripsere, et tanquam singulis fato adempti. Tria, non amplius, ut opinor, absolute traduntur inscripta, ILLE FECIT, quæ suis locis reddam: quo apparuit, summam artis securitatem auctori placuisse, et ob id magna invidia fuere omnia ea." I beg the reader to pay attention to Pliny's expression, "pingendi fingendique conditoribus." Pliny does not say that the custom of acknowledging their productions in the imperfect tense was universal among artists, or that all in every age had observed it; he expressly states that only the earliest masters, the creators of the plastic arts, *pingendi fingendique conditores*, Apelles, Polykletus, and their contemporaries, had shown this wise modesty; and since he only names these, he intimates quietly but distinctly enough that their successors, especially in later times, expressed greater confidence in themselves.

But if we allow this, as I think every one must, the inscription of one of the three artists of Laokoon which

[4] Lib. i.

has been discovered may be perfectly correct. without involving any untruth in Pliny's assertion that only three works were extant in the inscriptions on which their authors made use of the perfect tense, *i e.* among the ancient works of the periods of Apelles, Polykletus, Nicias, or Lysippus. But if so, it cannot be correct, as Herr Winckelmann maintains, that Athenodorus and his fellow-sculptors were contemporaries of Apelles and Lysippus. We must rather conclude—if it is true that among the works of the ancient artists, of Apelles and Polykletus, and the rest of this class, only three were to be found in the inscriptions on which a perfect tense was used; if it is true that Pliny himself has mentioned these three works by name,[5] it follows that Athanodorus, to whom

[5] At least he expressly promises to do it: "quæ suis locis reddam" If, however. he has not entirely forgotten it, he has only mentioned it in passing, and not in the way one expects after such a pledge. When, for example, he writes (lib xxxv sect 39): "Lysippus quoque Æginæ picturæ suæ inscripsit, ἐνέκαυσεν: quod profecto non fecisset, nisi encaustica inventa," it is manifest that he here adduces the word ἐνέκαυσεν as a proof of a very different fact. Had he, as Hardouin supposes, mentioned it as also being one of those works upon which the inscription was written in the aorist, he would not have failed to call attention to it Hardouin thinks he discovers the other two works of this kind in the following passage: "Idem (Divus Augustus) in Curia quoque, quam in Comitio consecrabat, duas tabulas impressit parieti: Nemeam sedentem supra leonem, palmigeram ipsam, adstante cum baculo sene, cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet Nicias scripsit se inussisse: tali enim usus est verbo Alterius tabulæ admiratio est, puberem filium seni patri similem esse, salva ætatis differentia, supervolante aquila draconem complexa Philochares hoc suum opus esse testatus est" (lib. xxxv sect 10) Here two different pictures are described, which Augustus put up in his newly built senate-house. The first was by Nikias, the second by Philochares What is said of Philochares is plain enough, but about Nikias there are some difficulties. Nemea was represented seated upon a lion, with a palm-branch in her hand; an old man with a staff in his hand stood near her: "cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet" What does this mean? Above whose head there hung a tablet, upon which a two-horse chariot was painted? Yet this is the only sense which can be put upon the words Thus another smaller picture was hung upon the main picture, and both of them were by Nikias? This is clearly what Hardouin understands. How else are two pictures of Nikias to be found, since one is expressly ascribed to Philochares? "Inscripsit Nicias igitur geminæ huic tabulæ suum nomen in hunc modum. Ο ΝΙΚΙΑΣ ΕΝΕΚΑΥΣΕΝ atque adeo e tribus operibus, quæ absolute fuisse inscripta, ILLE FECIT, indicavit

neither of these three pieces is attributed, and who yet uses a perfect tense in the inscription on his work, does not belong to these ancient artists He cannot be a contemporary of Apelles or Lysippus, but must be placed at a later period.

In short, I believe it may be admitted as a very trustworthy criterion that all artists who have made use of the ἐποίησε flourished long after the time of Alexander the

Præfatio ad Titum, duo hæc sunt Niciæ" I would ask Hardouin. Supposing Nikias had actually used the imperfect, and not the aorist, and Pliny had only wished to remark that the artist had employed ἐγκαίειν instead of γράφειν, would not the idiom of his language still have compelled him to say, *Nicias scripsit se inussisse?* But I will not insist upon this it may really have been Pliny's intention to record here one of the works in question. But who would be convinced about the two pictures, one of which hung over the other? I, at least, never could The words "cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet" must therefore be corrupt *Tabula bigæ*, "A painting of a two-horse chariot," does not sound like Pliny's Latin, even allowing that he uses bigæ elsewhere in the singular. And what kind of two-horse chariot was it likely to be? Perhaps it was of the kind used in the Nemean games, and thus the less picture would, in respect to its subject, be connected with the principal one. But this supposition will not stand, for four-horse chariots, not two, were commonly used at the Nemean games (Schmidius in Prol ad Nemeonicas, p 2) It once occurred to me that Pliny might have written the Greek word πτυχίον instead of bigæ, and that the transcribers did not understand it For we know, from a passage in Antigones Carystius, quoted by Zenobius (conf Gronovius t. ix. Antiquit Græc Præf p 7), that the ancient artists did not always inscribe their names upon the works themselves, but sometimes upon a tablet affixed to the picture or statue Such a tablet was called πτυχίον. This Greek word was perhaps explained by the gloss tabula, tabella, and tabula thus came to be inserted in the text Bigæ arose out of πτυχίον, and thus the reading tabula bigæ may be accounted for. Nothing can agree better with what follows than πτυχίον, for the subsequent sentence contains what was inscribed upon it The whole passage would stand thus "cujus supra caput πτυχίον dependet, quo Nicias scripsit se inussisse" Still I acknowledge that this correction is a little bold. But we are not obliged to propose a correction for every passage that we can prove to be corrupt I am contented with having performed the latter task, and leave the former to an abler hand. But to return to the point in question If Pliny thus speaks of only one painting of Nikias upon which the inscription was in the aorist, and the second of this kind is that of Lysippus mentioned above, which then is the third? I know not If I had to look for it in any other author than Pliny, I should feel no difficulty. It ought, however, to be found in Pliny, and there, I repeat, it is not.

Great, shortly before or under the Cæsars. Of Kleomenes it is indisputable; of Archelaus it is in the highest degree probable; and of Salpion the contrary at any rate cannot in any way be proved. The same may be said of the rest, without excepting Athenodorus.

Herr Winckelmann himself may act as judge in this question, but I protest in anticipation against the converse position. If all the artists who have made use of ἐποίησε belonged to a late period, it does not follow that all who used ἐποίει belonged to an early one. Even among the later artists there may have been some who really felt this modesty so becoming to a great man, and others who affected to feel it.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

NEXT to the Laokoon I was most curious to see what Herr Winckelmann would say of the so-called Borghese gladiator. I believe that I have made a discovery about this statue, to which I attach all the importance that can be attributed to such discoveries.

I was afraid that Herr Winckelmann might have anticipated me. I do not, however, find any intimation of it in his work; and if anything could render me distrustful of the correctness of my conjectures, it would be the fact that my fears are not realized.

"Some," says Herr Winckelmann,[1] "take this to be the statue of a discobolus, *i.e.* of one who is throwing a discus or round plate of metal; and this was the opinion expressed by the celebrated Herr von Stosch in a letter to me, but formed, I think, without sufficient consideration of the attitude in which such a figure would stand. For a man who is just going to throw draws his body backwards, and at the moment of the act lets the whole of his weight fall upon his right leg, while the left remains idle; but here it is just the reverse; the whole frame is thrown forwards and leans upon the left leg, whilst the right is extended backwards as far as it can be. The right arm is new, and

[1] Gesch. der Kunst, vol. ii p. 391.

a piece of a lance has been placed in its hand; on the left arm may be seen the strap of the shield which he bore. If one observes that the head and the eyes are directed upwards, and that the figure appears to be guarding with the shield against something which threatens it from above, this statue may be regarded with more justice as representing a soldier who had especially distinguished himself in a situation of danger, for it is to be presumed that among the Greeks a statue was never erected in honour of a gladiator at the public shows; and, besides, this work seems older than the introduction of such spectacles into Greece."

No decision can be juster. This statue is no more that of a gladiator than of a discobolus, it really represents a warrior who in such a posture distinguished himself at some perilous crisis But since Herr Winckelmann divined this so happily, how came he to stop short there? How was it that the warrior did not occur to his mind who, in precisely this posture, averted the overthrow of an entire army, and to whom his grateful country had a statue erected in precisely the same attitude?

In a word, the statue is Chabrias.

This is proved by the following passage from Nepos, in the Life of this general.[2] "Hic quoque in summis habitus est ducibus; resque multas memoria dignas gessit. Sed ex his elucet maxime, inventum ejus in prœlio, quod apud Thebas fecit quum Bœotiis subsidio venisset Namque in eo victoriæ fidente summo duce Agesilao, fugatis jam ab eo conductitiis catervis, reliquam phalangem loco vetuit cedere, obnixoque genu scuto, projectaque hasta impetum excipere hostium docuit Id novum Agesilaus contuens, progredi non est ausus, suosque jam incurrentes tuba revocavit. Hoc usque eo tota Græcia fama celebratum est, ut illo statu Chabrias sibi statuam fieri voluerit quæ publice ei ab Atheniensibus in foro constituta est Ex quo factum est, ut postea athletæ, ceterique artifices his statibus in statuis ponendis uterentur, in quibus victoriam essent adepti."

I know the reader will pause an instant before he

[2] Cap. i.

bestows his assent, but I hope it will only be for an instant The attitude of Chabrias does not appear to have been precisely the same as that of the Borghese statue. The lance thrown forward ("projecta hasta") is common to both; but commentators explain "obnixo genu scuto" by "obnixo in scutum"—"obfirmato genu ad scutum"; Chabrias showed his men how they should lean with their knees against their shields, and behind them await the enemy; the statue, on the contrary, raises its shield on high. But how if the commentators were wrong? Is it not possible that the words "obnixo genu scuto" ought not to be connected, but that "obnixo genu" and "scuto" should be taken separately, or the last read with the following words, "projectaque hasta"? If we only insert a single comma, the correspondence between the statue and description is complete. The statue is that of a soldier, "qui obnixo genu,[3] scuto projectaque hasta impetum hostis excipit." It represents Chabrias's action, and is the statue of Chabrias. That the comma is really wanting is proved by the *que* affixed to the *projecta*, which would be superfluous if "obnixo genu scuto" were connected; and, in fact, some editions have omitted it on that account.

The form of the characters in the artist's inscription upon the statue coincides exactly with the great antiquity which, under this supposition, must be accorded to the statue: and Herr Winckelmann has himself inferred from them that it is the most ancient of the statues now in Rome on which the masters have recorded their names. I leave it to his acute glance to determine whether he observes anything in its style which is in conflict with my opinion. Should he honour my suggestion with his

[3] Similarly Statius uses *obnixa pectora* (Thebaid lib vi. 863):—

> ". . . rumpunt obnixa furentes
> Pectora,"

which the old commentator of Barth explains by "*summa vi contra nitentia*" Ovid also (Halieut ii.) uses *obnixa fronte*, when speaking of the "scarus" endeavouring to force its way through the fish-trap, not with its head, but with its tail.

> "Non audet radiis obnixa occurrere fronte."

approval, I shall flatter myself that I have produced a better instance of how happily the classical authors may be illustrated by the ancient works of art, and the latter in their turn by the former, than can be found in the whole of Spence's folio.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WITH all the boundless reading and most extensive and minute knowledge of art which Herr Winckelmann has applied to his task, he has worked in the noble confidence of the ancient artists who expended all their industry upon the main object, and either executed the parts of less importance with, as it were, intentional negligence, or left them altogether to the hands of any chance artist.

It is no small merit to have only fallen into faults that any one might have avoided, faults which are seen at the first cursory reading, and which if I notice at all it is only with the object of reminding certain people who think that they alone have eyes that they are not worth remarking.

Already in his writings upon the imitation of Grecian works of art Herr Winckelmann has been several times misled by Junius. Junius is a very insidious author. His whole work is a cento, and while he always uses the words of the ancients he not unfrequently applies passages to painting which bear reference to anything rather than painting in their original context. When, *e.g.*, Herr Winckelmann desires to teach us that perfection can no more be reached by the mere imitation of nature in art than it can in poetry, and that the painter as well as poet must prefer the impossible, which is probable, to the merely possible, he adds, "the possibility and truth which Longinus requires of a painter, as opposed to the incredible in poetry, is perfectly consistent with it" But this addition had much better have been omitted, for it exhibits a seeming contradiction in the two greatest critics on art which is altogether without foundation. It is not true that Longinus ever said anything of the kind. He makes a somewhat similar remark upon eloquence and

the art of poetry, but in no way upon poetry and painting. Ὡς δ' ἕτερόν τι ἡ ῥητορικὴ φαντασία βούλεται, καὶ ἕτερον ἡ παρὰ ποιηταῖς, οὐκ ἂν λάθοι σε, he writes to his friend Terentian;[1] οὐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὲν ἐν ποιήσει τέλος ἐστὶν ἔκπληξις, τῆς δ' ἐν λόγοις ἐναργεία. And again, Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς μυθικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν ὑπερέκπτωσιν, καὶ παντῃ τὸ πιστὸν ὑπεραίρουσαν τῆς δὲ ῥητορικῆς φαντασίας, κάλλιστον ἀεὶ τὸ ἔμπρακτον καὶ ἐναληθές. Only Junius substitutes painting for oratory; and it was in him, and not in Longinus, that Herr Winckelmann read,[2] "Præsertim cum poeticæ phantasiæ finis sit ἔκπληξις, pictoriæ vero, ἐναργεία, καὶ τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς, ut loquitur idem Longinus," &c. True, they are Longinus's words, but not Longinus's meaning.

The same must have been the case with the following observation. "All actions," he says,[3] "and attitudes of Greek figures which are not marked by the character of wisdom, but are too vehement and wild, fell into a fault, which the ancient artists called *parenthyrsus*." The ancient artists? That can only be proved out of Junius, for *parenthyrsus* was a technical term in rhetoric, and perhaps, as the passage in Longinus appears to intimate, used only by Theodorus. Τούτῳ παράκειται τρίτον τι κακίας εἶδος ἐν τοῖς παθητικοῖς, ὅπερ ὁ Θεόδωρος παρένθυρσον ἐκάλει· ἔστι δὲ πάθος ἄκαιρον καὶ κενόν, ἔνθα μὴ δεῖ πάθους· ἢ ἄμετρον ἔνθα μετρίου δεῖ.[4] I even doubt whether generally this word can be transferred to painting. For in eloquence and poetry there is a pathos which may be carried to its extreme point without becoming *parenthyrsus*. It is only the deepest pathos out of place that is *parenthyrsus*. But in the painting extreme pathos would always be *parenthyrsus*, even if it can be perfectly justified by the circumstances of the person who expresses it.

According to all appearance, therefore, the various inaccuracies in the History of Art have arisen merely from Herr Winckelmann having in haste consulted Junius instead of the originals. For instance, when he is proving

[1] περὶ Ὕψους, τμῆμα ιδ'. Edit. T. Fabri, pp. 36–39.
[2] De Pictura Vet. lib. I. cap. iv. p. 33.
[3] Von der Nachahmung der Griech. Werke, &c., p. 23.
[4] Τμῆμα β'.

by examples that among the Greeks all excellence in every art and craft was especially valued, and that the best workman even in the most trifling matters might succeed in immortalizing his name, he quotes among others the following instance.[5] "We know the name of a maker of particularly accurate balances or pairs of scales: it is Parthenius." Herr Winckelmann can only have read the words of Juvenal to which he is here referring, "Lances Parthenio factus," in the list of Junius; for if he had referred to Juvenal himself he would not have been misled by the equivocal meaning of the word "lanx," but would have seen at once from the context that the poet was speaking, not of balances and scales, but of plates and dishes. Juvenal is praising Catullus because in a perilous storm at sea he had done as the beaver does who mutilates himself to save his life,[6] and had thrown all his most valuable baggage overboard, in order that he and the ship might not go down together. These valuables he describes, and amongst other things says—

"Ille nec argentum dubitabat mittere, lances
Parthenio factas, urnæ cratera capacem
Et dignum sitiente Pholo, vel conjuge Tusci.
Adde et bascaudas et mille escaria, multum
Cælati, biberet quo callidus emptor Olynthi."

What can *lances* mean here, joined as it is with goblets and kettles, but "plates and dishes"? and all Juvenal intends to say is that Catullus threw overboard his whole service of plate, among which were some embossed dishes of the workmanship of Parthenius. "Parthenius cælatoris nomen," says an old scholiast. But when Grangæus in his commentary adds to this name "sculptor, de quo Plinius," he must have written at haphazard, for Pliny does not mention any artist of this name.

"Even," continues Herr Winckelmann, "the name of the saddler, as we should call him, who made Ajax's leather shield has been preserved" But he cannot have derived this statement from the authority to which he

[5] Gesch der Kunst, i p 136.
[6] [See Pliny, Nat Hist viii 47.—ED]

refers his reader, viz from Herodotus's Life of Homer. Certainly the lines of the Iliad are there quoted in which the poet applies the name of Tychios to this worker in leather; but it is expressly stated that properly a leather-worker of Homer's acquaintance was so called, whose name was inserted as a proof of friendship and gratitude.[7]

ἀπέδωκε δὲ χάριν καὶ Τυχίῳ τῷ σκύτει· ὃς ἐδέξατο αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ Νέῳ τείχει, προσελθόντα πρὸς τὸ σκυτεῖον, ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι καταζεύξας ἐν τῇ Ἰλιάδι τοῖς δέ:

αἴας δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων σάκος ἠΰτε πύργον,
χάλκεον ἑπταβόειον· ὅ οἱ Τύχιος κάμε τεύχων
Σκυτοτόμων ὄχ' ἄριστος, Ὕλῃ ἔνι οἰκία ναίων.

The position, therefore, is exactly opposite to that which Herr Winckelmann intended to maintain. The name of the saddler who made Ajax's shield was in Homer's time already so entirely forgotten that the poet was free to substitute a completely strange name in its stead.

Various other trifling faults are mere errors of memory, or refer to subjects which he only introduces cursorily as illustrations, *e.g.*—

It was Hercules, and not Bacchus, of whom Parrhasius boasted that he appeared to him in a vision in the same form in which he painted him.[8]

Tauriscus was not a native of Rhodes, but of Tralles in Lydia.[9]

The Antigone was not the first of Sophokles's tragedies.[10]

[7] Herod de Vita Homeri. Edit Wessel, p. 756 [v. *Il* vii. 219]

[8] Gesch der Kunst, vol. i. p. 176. Plinius, lib. xxxv. sect 36. Athenæus, lib xii p 543

[9] Gesch der Kunst, vol. ii p 353 Plinius, lib. xxxvi. 4, 10. [Taurisci, non cælatoris illius, sed Tralliani."]

[10] Gesch. der Kunst, ii p 328 "The Antigone, his first tragedy, was acted in the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad." The date is about correct, but it is quite incorrect that the Antigone was his first tragedy. Samuel Petit, whom Herr Winckelmann quotes in a note, is far from making this statement, but expressly places the Antigone in the third year of the eighty-fourth Olympiad. Sophokles, in the following year, accompanied Perikles to Samos; and the date of this

But I refrain from multiplying such trifles. For censoriousness it could not be taken; but whoever knows my

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expedition can be fixed accurately. I show in my Life of Sophokles, by a comparison of a passage of the elder Pliny, that the first tragedy of this poet was, in all probability, the Triptolemus Pliny is speaking (lib xviii sec 12) of the different qualities of corn in different countries, and concludes "Hæc fuere sententiæ, Alexandro Magno regnante, cum clarissima fuit Græcia, atque in toto terrarum orbe potentissima; ita tamen ut ante mortem ejus annis fere CXLV Sophocles poeta in fabula Triptolemo frumentum Italicum ante cuncta laudaverit, ad verbum translata sententia —

Et fortunatam Italiam frumento canere candido."

It is true that the first tragedy of Sophokles is not expressly spoken of here; but it proves that its date, which Plutarch and the Scholiast and the Arundel marbles all agree in placing in the seventy-seventh Olympiad, coincides so closely with the year which Pliny assigns to the Triptolemus, that this last must be allowed to have been the first tragedy of Sophokles The calculation is fairly made out Alexander died in the hundred and fourteenth Olympiad; a hundred and forty-five years are equivalent to thirty-six Olympiads and a year, if this number be subtracted from the total, there remain seventy-seven Sophokles's Tripolemus therefore was published in the seventy-seventh Olympiad; in the same Olympiad, and even, as I prove, in the last year of it, his first tragedy was acted The conclusion is obvious they were one and the same tragedy I prove, at the same time, therefore, that Petit might have spared himself the trouble of writing the whole half of the chapter in his Miscellanea (lib iii. cap xviii) which Winckelmann has quoted. It is unnecessary in the passage in Pliny which he there wishes to amend to change the name of the archon *Aphesion* into *Demotion*, or *ἀνέψιος*. He had only to pass from the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad into the fourth, and he would have found that the archon of this year is as often, if not oftener, called Aphesion by ancient authors, as he is Phædon He is called Phædon by Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius Halicarnasseus, and by the anonymous author of the table of the Olympiads He is called Aphesion, on the other hand, on the Arundel marbles, by Apollodorus, and by Diogenes Laertius, who is quoting this latter Plutarch speaks of him under both names. in the Life of Theseus, Phædon, in that of Cimon, Aphesion The conjecture of Palmerius is therefore rendered probable "Aphesionem et Phædonem Archontas fuisse eponymos, scilicet, uno in magistratu mortuo, suffectus fuit alter" (Exercit p 452) Herr Winckelmann, as I opportunely recollect, has allowed another error concerning Sophokles to creep into his first work on the Imitation of Grecian Works of Art (p. 8) "The most beautiful young people danced unclad upon the stage, and Sophokles, the great Sophokles, was, in his youth, the first who exhibited this spectacle to his fellow-citizens" Sophokles never danced unclad upon the stage. He did dance around the trophies after the victory of Sala-

high esteem for Herr Winckelmann might consider it *krokylegmus*.[11]

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mis According to some authors, he was naked when he did so; but according to others, he was clothed (Athen. lib. 1 p. m. 20). Sophokles was, in fact, one of the boys who were carried over to Salamis for security; and it was upon this island that it was the pleasure of the tragic muse to assemble her three favourites in a typical gradation. The bold Æschylus contributed to the victory; the young Sophokles danced around the trophies; and Euripides was born upon that same fortunate isle on the very day of the victory

[11] [κροκυλεγμός, *dealing in trifles*, a word found in Hesychius.—ED.]

HOW THE ANCIENTS REPRESENTED DEATH.

[This essay was published separately in 1769. It has not been translated before.]

INTRODUCTION.

THE indisputable fact that nearly all Lessing's works owe their existence to some personal impetus has gained him the undesirable reputation of being a kind of philosophical Ishmaelite. But this is not absolutely the case. Lessing did not attack his contemporaries for the pure pleasure of aggression, but because as Heine so well expresses it "he was the living critique of his period." Polemics were his delight in so far as he hoped to rectify what was erroneous and hence when he saw himself or others unjustly attacked, he at once flew to his pen. But it was not fighting for fighting's sake, but for the sake of what he held to be the truth. After the publication of the 'Laokoon,' a certain Klotz, Professor of the University of Halle, published a very unwarrantable attack upon its accuracy and scholarship, and among other matters, he accused Lessing of having been guilty of "an unpardonable fault." Such an accusation from such a quarter highly exasperated Lessing, who was moreover in an irritable state at the time, owing to the failure of his scheme with the Hamburg theatre. This induced him to write his 'Antiquarian Letters,' which were true polemics, but it also led him to write his little essay 'How the Ancients represented Death,' which he was

very desirous should not be confounded with the circumstances that gave it birth, though it had also been prompted by a remark of Klotz's. Klotz had averred, in reply to Lessing's assertion in a note of the 'Laokoon' that the ancients never represented death as a skeleton, that they constantly thus represented it and referred to figures of skeletons found on gems and reliefs. Klotz had here confounded two distinct ideas, and Lessing, attracted by the theme, wrote this short essay to prove his theory. The result was that his idea of the genius with a reversed torch as a personification of death was eagerly accepted by his contemporaries, who were glad to banish the grinning skeleton of Christian and mediæval art. Goethe in 'Wahrheit und Dichtung' expresses the joy with which the essay was greeted. A few archæologists differed from Lessing in his interpretation of Pausanias, concerning the crossing of the feet, among them Heyne suggested that "bent outwardly" may be intended in lieu of "crossed," but agreed with Lessing that "crooked" could never have been meant. Such philological niceties do not detract from the excellence of the whole, and this little investigation has become a classic among Lessing's works, praised even by Goeze in the very midst of their bitter feud.

HOW THE ANCIENTS REPRESENTED DEATH.



Part of a SARCOPHAGUS (From Bellori, see p. 183.)
"Nullique ea tristis imago"[1]—STATIUS.

PREFACE.



I SHOULD be sorry if this disquisition were to be estimated according to the circumstance that gave it occasion. This is so despicable, that only the manner in which I have used it can excuse me for having used it at all.

[1] Theb. 10, 105: "And to none does this shape seem sorrowful"

Not indeed that I do not consider our present public to be too delicately averse to all that is called polemics, or resembles it It seems as though it wished to forget that it owes the elucidation of many an important point to mere contradiction, and that mankind would be of one mind on no subject in the world if they had as yet never wrangled about anything.

"Wrangled," for so politeness names all discussion. Wrangling has become something so unmannerly that we must be less ashamed of hatred and calumny than of controversy

If however the greater part of the public, which will not hear of controversial writings, consisted of authors, then it might perhaps be something else than mere politeness that was intolerant of a polemical tone. It is so displeasing to egotism and self-conceit! It is so dangerous to the surreptitious reputation!

And truth, they say, so rarely gains thereby.—So rarely? Granted that as yet truth has been established through no contest, yet nevertheless truth has gained by every controversy. Controversies have stimulated the spirit of investigation, have kept prejudice and authority in constant convulsion, in brief, have hindered gilded untruth from taking root in the place of truth.

Neither can I share the opinion that controversies are only demanded by the most important truths. Importance is a relative idea, and what is very unimportant in one respect may become very important in another. As a constituent of our cognition one truth is therefore as important as another, and whoever is indifferent in the most trifling matter to truth and untruth, will never persuade me that he loves truth merely for the sake of truth

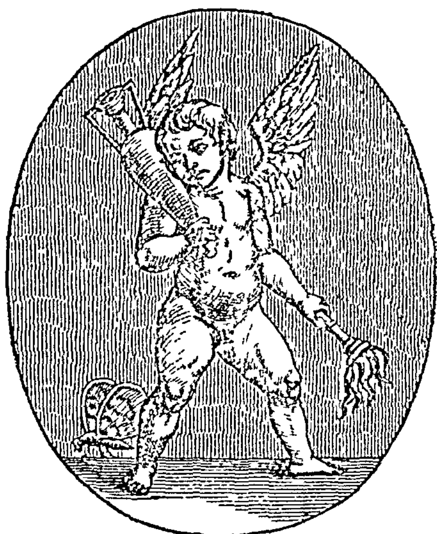
I will not impose my way of thinking concerning this matter on any one But I may at least beg him who differs from me most widely, if he intends to speak publicly of this investigation, to forget that it is aimed at any one Let him enter upon the subject and keep silence concerning the personages. To which of these the art critic is most inclined, which he holds in general to be the best writer, nobody demands to know from him. All that is desired to learn from him is this, whether he, on his part,

has aught to place in the scale of the one or the other which in the present instance would turn, or further weight the scales. Only such extra weight, frankly accorded, makes him that which he wishes to be; but he must not fancy that his mere bold enunciation would be such an extra weight. If he be the man who overtops us both, let him seize the opportunity to instruct us both.

Of the irregularity which he will soon perceive in my work, he may say what likes him best. If only he does not let the subject be prejudiced thereby. I might certainly have set to work more systematically; I might have placed my reasons in a more advantageous light; I might still have used this or that rare or precious book; indeed what might I not have done!

It is moreover only on long-known monuments of ancient art on which I have been enabled to lay the foundations of my investigation. Treasures of this kind are daily brought to light, and I myself should wish to be among those who can first satiate their thirst for knowledge. But it would be singular if only he should be deemed rich who possesses the most newly minted money. It is rather the part of prudence not to have too much to do with this before its true value has been established beyond question.

The antiquarian who, to prove a new assertion, refers us to an ancient work of art that only he knows, that he has first discovered, may be a very honest man, and it would be sad for research if this were not the case with seven-eighths of the confraternity. But he, who grounds his assertion only on that which a Boissard or Pighius has seen a hundred or more years before him, can positively be no cheat, and to discover something new in the old, is at least as laudable, as to confirm the old through the new.



GEM. (From Licetus, see p 200)

THE CAUSE

HERR KLOTZ always thinks he is at my heels. But always when I turn to look after him at his call, I see him wandering in a cloud of dust, quite at one side on a road that I have never trodden. "Herr Lessing," so runs his latest call of this nature,[1] "will permit me to assign to his assertion that the ancient artists did not represent death as a skeleton ('Laokoon,' ch. xi. note,) the same value as to his two other propositions, that the ancients never represented a fury, or a hovering figure without wings. He cannot even persuade himself that the recumbent bronze skeleton which rests with one arm on a cinerary urn in the Ducal Gallery at Florence, is a real antique Perhaps he would be more easily persuaded, if he looked at the engraved gems on which a complete skeleton is portrayed (see Buonarotti, 'Oss. sopr. alc. Vetri,' t xxxviii. 3, and Lippert's 'Daktyliothek,' 2nd 1000, n. 998). In the Museum Florentinum this skeleton to which an old man

[1] In the preface to the second part of Caylus's treatises [For the controverted statements in 'Laokoon,' see above, pp. 15 *note* and 51 *note* 1, 65 *note* 3, and especially 73, *note* 1.]

in a sitting attitude is playing something on the flute is likewise to be seen on a gem. (See 'Les Satires de Perse, par Sinner,' p. 30.) But engraved stones belong to allegory, Herr Lessing will say. Well then I refer him to the metallic skeleton in the Kircherian Museum (see 'Ficoroni Gemmas antiq. rarior.' t viii.). If he is not yet satisfied, I will over and above remind him that Herr Winckelmann, in his 'Essay on Allegory,' p. 81, has already taken notice of two ancient marble urns in Rome on which skeletons stand. If my numerous examples are not tedious to Herr Lessing, I will still add 'Sponii Miscell. Antiq Erud.' sect. i. art III., especially No. 5. And since I have once taken the liberty to note some things against him, I must refer him to the splendid collection of painted vases possessed by Mr Hamilton, to show him another fury on a vase (Collection of Etruscan, Grecian, and Roman antiquities from the cabinet of the Hon. Wm. Hamilton, No. 6)."

It is, by Heaven, a great liberty, forsooth, to contradict me! And whoever contradicts me must I suppose be very careful whether he is tedious to me or no!

Unquestionably a contradiction such as Herr Klotz charges me with, is enough at any rate, to put the coolest, calmest man out of temper. If I say "it is not yet night," then Herr Klotz says, "but it is long past noon." If I say "seven and seven do not make fifteen," then he says, "but seven and eight do make fifteen." And this is what he calls contradicting me, confuting me, convicting me of unpardonable errors.

I beg of him for one moment to have rather more recourse to his understanding than to his memory.

I have asserted that the ancient artists did not represent Death as a skeleton, and I assert it still. But is to say that the ancient artists did not represent Death as a skeleton the same thing as saying that they never represented a skeleton at all? Is there absolutely no difference between these two sentences, so that he who proves the one must needs prove the other? that he who denies the one must needs deny the other?

Here is an engraved gem, and a marble urn, and there a brazen image, all are undoubtedly antique, and all

represent a skeleton. Very good. Who does not know this? Who can help knowing this if there is nothing amiss with his fingers and eyes, as soon as he wishes to know it? Must antique works of art be always construed allegorically?

These antique works of art represent skeletons; but do these skeletons represent Death? Must a skeleton of necessity represent Death, the personified abstraction of Death, the deity of Death? Why should not a skeleton simply represent a skeleton? Why not even something else?

INQUIRY.

HERR KLOTZ's acumen goes far! I need not answer him more, but yet I will do more than I need. Since some other scholars more or less share Herr Klotz's perverse idea, I will establish two things for their benefit.

Firstly: that the ancient artists really represented Death, the deity of Death, under quite another image than that of a skeleton.

Secondly: that the ancient artists, when they represented a skeleton, meant by this skeleton something quite different from Death as the deity of Death.

I. The ancient artists did not portray Death as a skeleton, for they portrayed him according to the Homeric idea,[1] as the twin brother of Sleep, and represented both Death and Sleep, with that likeness between them which we naturally expect in twins. On a chest of cedarwood in the temple of Juno at Elis, they both rested as boys in the arms of Night. Only the one was white, the other black; the one slept, the other seemed to sleep; both with their feet crossed.[2]

Here I will invoke a principle to which, probably, very few exceptions will be found, namely this, that the ancients faithfully retained the sensuous representation which had once been given to an ideal being. For even though such representations are arbitrary, and every one has an equal right to conceive them thus or thus, yet the ancients held

[1] Il. xvi. 681, 2. [2] Pausanias, Eliac. cap. xviii. p. 422.

it good and needful that the late comers should waive this right and follow the first inventor. The cause is clear: without this general uniformity no general recognition is possible.

Consequently this resemblance of Death to Sleep, once accepted by the Greek artists, will, according to all likelihood, have been always observed by them. It showed itself indubitably on the statues which these two beings had at Lacedæmon, for they reminded Pausanias[3] of Homer's representation of them as brothers

Now what most distant resemblance with Sleep can be conceived, if Death stood beside him as a mere skeleton?

"Perhaps," writes Winckelmann,[4] "Death was thus portrayed by the inhabitants of Gades, the modern Cadiz, who among all peoples were the only one who worshipped Death."

Now Winckelmann had not the faintest reason for this "perhaps" Philostratus[5] only says of the Gaditani "that they were the only people who sang pæans to Death." He does not even name a statue, not to mention that he gives us no reason whatever to presume that this statue represented a skeleton. Finally, what has the representation of the Gaditani to do with the matter? It is a question of the symbolical pictures of the Greeks, not of those of the barbarians

I observe, by the way, that I cannot concur with Winckelmann in rendering the words of Philostratus, *τὸν θάνατον μόνοι ἀνθρώπων παιανίζονται*, as "the Gaditani were among all peoples the only one who worshipped Death." *Worshipped* says too little for the Gaditani, and denies too much of the other peoples. Even among the Greeks Death was not wholly unreverenced. The peculiarity of the Gaditani was only this, that they held the deity of Death to be accessible to entreaty, that they believed that they could by sacrifices and pæans mollify his rigour and delay his decrees. For pæans mean in their special sense, songs sung to a deity to avert some evil. Philostratus seems to refer to the passage in Æschylus, where it is

[3] Laconic. cap xix. p 253. [4] Allego. p. 83.
[5] Vita Apoll. lib. v. c. 4.

said of Death, that he is the only one among the gods who regards no gifts and hence has no altars, to whom no pæans are sung.

Οὐδ' ἔστι βωμὸς, οὐδὲ παιωνίζεται.

Winckelmann himself mentions in his 'Essay on Allegory' regarding Sleep,[6] that on a gravestone in the Palazzo Albani, Sleep is represented as a young genius resting on a reversed torch, beside his brother Death, "and just so represented these two genii may be found on a cinerary urn in the Collegio Clementino in Rome." I wish he had recollected this representation when dealing with Death itself. Then we should not miss the only genuine and general representation of Death where he furnishes us only with various allegories of various modes of dying.

We might also wish that Winckelmann had described the two monuments somewhat more precisely. But he says very little about them, and this little is not as definite as it might be Sleep leans upon a reversed torch; but does Death do so too? and exactly in the same way? Is there not any distinction between both genii? and what is it? I do not know that these monuments have been much known elsewhere where one might find an answer for oneself.

However they are, happily, not unique of their kind. Winckelmann did not notice anything on them that was not noticeable on others that had been known long before him. He saw a young genius with a reversed torch and the distinct superscription *Somno;* but on a gravestone in Boissard[7] we see the same figure, and the inscription *Somno Orestilia Filia* leaves us as little in doubt as to its meaning. It often occurs in the same place without inscription, indeed on more than one gravestone and sarcophagus it occurs in duplicate.[8] Now what in this exactly similar duplication can the other more fitly be than the twin-brother of Sleep, Death, if the one be a picture of Sleep?

It is surprising that archæologists should not know this, or if they knew it should forget to apply it in

[6] p 76. [7] Topograph parte iii p 48. [8] Parte v pp 22, 23

their expositions. I will only give a few examples of this.

Before all others I remember the marble sarcophagus which Bellori made known in his 'Admiranda,'[9] and has explained as relating to the last fate of man. Here is shown among other things a winged youth who stands in a pensive attitude beside a corpse, his left foot crossing his right, his right hand and his head resting on a reversed torch supported on the breast of the corpse, and in his left hand which grasps the torch, he holds a wreath with a butterfly.[10] This figure, says Bellori, is Amor, who is extinguishing the torch, that is to say the affections, on the breast of the dead man. And I say, this figure is Death.

Not every winged boy or youth need be an Amor. Amor and the swarm of his brothers had this formation in common with various spiritual beings. How many of the race of genii were represented as boys?[11] And what had not its genius? Every place, every man, every social connexion of mankind, every occupation of men from the lowest to the highest,[12] yes I might say, every inanimate thing, whose preservation was of consequence, had its genius If this had not been a wholly unknown matter, to Herr Klotz among others also, he would surely not have spared us the greater part of his sugary story of Amor on engraved gems.[13] With the most attentive fingers this great scholar searched for this pretty little god through all engraved books, and wherever he only saw a little naked boy, there he cried: Amor! Amor! and registered him quickly in his catalogue I wish him much patience who will scrutinize these Klotzian Amors. At each moment he will have to eject one from the ranks. But of this elsewhere.

Enough that not every winged boy or youth must necessarily be an Amor; for then this one on the monument of Bellori need least of all be so.

And absolutely cannot so be! For no allegorical figure

[9] Tab lxxix. [10] [See illustration, p 175.]
[11] Barthius ad Kutilu lib i. v. 327, p 121. [12] *Ibid* p 128.
[13] Uber den Nutzen und Gebr. der alt geschnitt. St pp. 194–224.

may be contradictory to itself. This however an Amor would be whose work it is to extinguish the affections in the breast of man. Such an Amor is just on this account no Amor.

Rather everything that is about and on this winged youth speaks in favour of the figure of Death.

For if it had only been proved of Sleep that the ancients represented him as a young genius with wings, this alone would sufficiently justify us in presuming the same of his twin brother, Death. "Somni idolum senile fingitur." Barth wrote in a happy-go-lucky way [14] to justify his punctuation of a passage in Statius

"Crimine quo merui, juvenis placidissime divûm,
Quove errore miser, donis ut solus egerem
Somne tuis?——"

the poet implored Sleep, and Barth would have that the poet said *juvenis* of himself, not of Sleep.

"Crimine quo merui juvenis, placidissime divûm," &c.

So be it, because at a pinch so it might be, but the reason is nevertheless quite futile. Sleep was a youthful deity with all poets, he loved one of the Graces, and Juno, in return for an important service, gave him this Grace to wife. And yet artists are declared to have represented him as an old man? That could not be credited of them, even if the contrary were no longer visible on any monument.

But not only Sleep, as we see, but another Sleep, that can be no other than Death, is to be beheld on the less known monuments of Winckelmann, and on those more familiar of Boissard, as a young genius with reversed torch. If Death is a young genius there, why could not also a young genius be Death here? And must he not so be, since, besides the reversed torch, all his other attributes are the most beautiful, most eloquent attributes of Death?

What can more distinctly indicate the end of life than an extinguished, reversed torch? If it is Sleep, this short interruption to life, who here rests on such a torch, with how much greater right may not Death do so?

[14] Ad Statium, Silv. v. 4.

The wings too are even more fitly his than Sleep's. His assault is even more sudden, his passage more rapid.

"——Seu me tranquilla Senectus
Expectat, seu Mors atris circumvolat alis"

—says Horace.[15]

And the wreath in his left hand? It is the mortuary garland. All corpses were wreathed among the Greeks and Romans; wreaths were strewn upon the corpse by surviving friends; the funeral pile, urn and monument were decked with wreaths.[16]

Finally, the butterfly above this wreath? Who does not know that a butterfly is the emblem of the soul, and especially of the departed soul?

To this must be added the entire position of the figure, beside a corpse and leaning upon this corpse. What deity, what higher being could and might take this position, save Death himself? A dead body, according to the idea of the ancients, polluted all that approached it, and not only the mortals who touched it or did but behold it, but even the gods themselves. The sight of a corpse was absolutely forbidden to all of them.

——ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ θέμις φθιτοὺς ὁρᾶν

Euripides[17] makes Diana say to the dying Hippolytus. Yes, to avoid this spectacle they had to withdraw as soon as the dying man drew his last breath. For Diana continues thus:

οὐδ᾽ ὄμμα χραίνειν θανασίμοισιν ἐκπνοαῖς·
ὁρῶ δὲ σ᾽ ἤδη τοῦδε πλησίον κακοῦ·

—and therewith departs from her favourite. For the same reason Apollo says in the same poet[18] that he must now depart from the cherished abode of Admetus because Alkestis nears her end.

ἐγώ δε, μὴ μίασμά μ᾽ ἐν δόμοις κίχῃ,
λείπω μελάθρων τῶνδε φιλτάτην στέγην.

15 Lib. ii. Sat. i v. 57, 58.
16 Car. Paschalii Coronarum, lib. iv. c. 5.
17 Hippol. v 1437.
18 Alc. v. 22, 23.

I consider this circumstance, that the gods might not pollute themselves by the sight of a corpse, as very cogent in this place. It is a second reason why it cannot be Amor who stands beside the corpse, and is also a reason against all the other gods, the one god alone excepted who cannot possibly pollute himself by regarding a corpse, Death himself.

Or is it thought that perchance yet another deity is to be excepted, namely, the especial genius, the especial guardian spirit of man? Would it then be something preposterous, it might be said, if a man's genius stood mourning beside his body, since its vital extinction forces him to separate from it for ever? Yet even though this idea would not be preposterous, it would be wholly opposed to the ancient mode of thought, according to which even a man's guardian spirit did not await his actual death, but parted from him before the total separation of body and soul ensued. This is manifestly attested by several passages, and consequently this genius cannot be the especial genius of the just departed mortal on whose breast he is resting his torch.

I must not pass over in silence a peculiarity in his position I seem to find in it a confirmation of a conjecture which I advanced in the same part of the Laokoon [20] This conjecture encountered objections; it may now be seen whether on good grounds

When namely Pausanias describes the representation on a sarcophagus in the temple of Juno at Elis, above named, where among other things there appears a woman who holds in her right arm a white sleeping boy, and in her left a black boy, καθεύδοντι ἐοικότα, which may equally mean "who resembles the sleeping boy" as "who seems to sleep," he adds. ἀμφοτέρους διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας. These words are rendered by the Latin translator as *distortis utrinque pedibus*, and by the French as *les pieds contrefaits.* I asked to what purpose the crooked feet here? How come Sleep and Death by these unshapely limbs? What are they meant to indicate? And, at a loss for an

[19] Wonna, Exercit iii de Geniis, cap. 2, § 7. [20] See above, p 73 note.

answer, I proposed to translate διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας not by "crooked" but by "crossed feet," because this is the usual position of sleepers, and Sleep is thus represented on ancient monuments.

It will be needful first to quote the whole passage in its connected form, because Sylburg deemed an emendation necessary in those very words. πεποίηται δὲ γυνὴ παῖδα λευκὸν καθεύδοντα ἀνέχουσα τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ, τῇ δὲ ἑτέρᾳ μέλανα ἔχει παῖδα καθεύδοντι ἐοίκοτα, ἀμφοτέρους διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας. Sylburg deemed διεστραμμένους objectionable, and thought that it would be better to read διεστραμμένον instead, because it is preceded by ἐοίκοτα, and both refer to παῖδα.[21] Now this change would not only be superfluous, but also quite false. Superfluous, because why should this διαστρέφεσθαι refer just to παῖδα, since it may as well refer to ἀμφοτέρους or πόδας? False, because thus ἀμφοτέρους could only belong to πόδας, and we should have to translate "crooked in both feet," while it still refers to the double παῖδα, and we must translate "both with crooked feet." That is to say, if διεστραμμένος here means crooked and can mean crooked at all!

Now I must confess that when I wrote the passage in the 'Laokoon,' I knew of no reason why Sleep and Death should be depicted with crooked feet. Only afterwards I found in Rondel [22] that the ancients meant to denote by these crooked feet, the ambiguity and fallaciousness of dreams But on what is this action founded? and what does it mean? What it should explain, it would only half explain at best. Death surely is dreamless, and yet Death has the same crooked feet. For, as I have said, ἀμφοτέρους must needs refer to the preceding double παῖδα, else ἀμφοτέρους taken with τοὺς πόδας would be a very shallow pleonasm. If a being has crooked feet at all, it follows of itself that both feet are crooked.

But if some one only on this account submitted to Sylburg's reading (διεστραμμένον for διεστραμμένους) in order to be able to give the crooked feet to Sleep alone? Then

[21] Rectius διεστραμμένον, ut antea ἐοίκοτα, respiciunt enim accusativum παῖδα

[22] Expos Signi veteris Tolliani, p. 294. Fortuitorum Jacobi Tollii.

let this obstinate man show me any antique Sleep with such feet. There are enough statues as well as *bas-reliefs* extant, which archæologists unanimously recognise as Sleep. Where is there one on which crooked feet can as much as be suspected?

What follows hence? If the crooked feet of Death and Sleep cannot be satisfactorily interpreted, if crooked feet assigned to the latter are not in any antique representation, then I think nothing follows more naturally than the presumption that the crooked feet here are a mere conceit. They are founded on the single passage in Pausanias, on a single word in that passage, and this word is over and above capable of quite another meaning.

For διεστραμμένος from διαστρέφειν does not mean only "crooked," "bent," as "distorted" in general, "brought out of its direction", not so much *tortuosus*, *distortus*, as *obliquus*, *transversus*, and πόδας διεστραμμένοι can be translated as well by transverse, obliquely placed feet, as by crooked feet; indeed it is better and more accurately rendered by the former than by the latter.

But that διεστραμμένος could be thus translated would be little to the point The apparent meaning is not always the true one. The following is of greater weight and gives a complete turn to the scale; to translate πόδας διεστραμμένοι as I suggest by "with crossed feet" is, in the case of Death as well as of Sleep, not only most beautiful and appropriate in meaning, but is also often to be seen on ancient monuments

Crossed feet are the natural attitude of a sleeper when sleeping a quiet healthful sleep. This position has unanimously been given by the ancient artists to every person whom they wished to depict in such sleep. Thus the so-called Cleopatra sleeps in the Belvedere, thus sleeps the Nymph on an old monument in Boissard; so sleeps, or is about to sink into sleep, the Hermaphrodite of Dioskurides It would be superfluous to multiply such examples. I can only at present recall one ancient figure sleeping in another posture. (Herr Klotz is still very welcome to run quickly over pages of his books of engravings and show me several more.) But this single figure is a drunken faun too overtaken in wine for a quiet

sleep[23] The ancient artists observed this attitude down to sleeping animals. The two antique lions of yellowish marble among the royal antiquities at Berlin sleep with their fore-paws crossed and rest their heads on them. No wonder therefore that Sleep himself has been represented by them in the attitude so common to sleepers. I have referred to Sleep in Maffei[24] and I might equally well have referred to a similar marble in Tollius. Maffei also mentions two smaller ones, formerly belonging to Constable Colonna, little or in no respect different.

Even in waking figures the posture of crossed feet is a sign of repose. Not a few of the half or wholly recumbent figures of river gods rest thus on their urns, and even in standing persons one foot crossing the other is the actual attitude of pause and quiescence. Therefore Mercuries and Fauns sometimes appear in this position, especially if we find them absorbed in their flute-playing or some other recreation.

Now let all these probabilities be weighed against the mere downright contradictions with which it has been endeavoured to dispose of my explanation. The profoundest is the following, from a scholar to whom I am indebted for more important admonitions. "The Lessing explanation of *διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας*," says the author of the 'Kritischen Wälder,'[25] "seems to contradict linguistic usage; and if we are to venture conjectures, I could just as well say 'they slept with crossed feet,' *i.e.* the foot of the one stretched over the foot of the other, to show the relationship of Death and Sleep," &c.

Against linguistic usage? How so? Does *διεστραμμένος* mean anything else but related? and must all that is related be necessarily crooked? How could the one with crossed feet be named more exactly and better in Greek than *διεστραμμένον (κατὰ) τοὺς πόδας*? or *διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας*. with *ἔχοντα* understood? I do not know in the least what there is herein against the natural meaning of words or opposed to the genuine construction of the

[23] In Maffei (t. xciv.) where we must resent the taste of this commentator who desires perforce to turn such an indecent figure into a Bacchus [24] Tabl. cli. [25] [Herder, Tr.]

language. If Pausanias meant to say "crooked," why did he not use the usual word σκολιός?

There is undoubtedly much room for conjecture. But does a conjecture, which has nothing but mere possibility in its favour, deserve to be opposed to another that wants little of being an established truth? Nay, I can scarcely allow the conjecture that is opposed to mine to be even possible. For the one boy rested in the one arm, the other in the other arm of Night; consequently the entwinement of the feet of the one with the feet of the other can scarcely be understood.

Finally, assuming the possibility of this enlacement, would διεστραμμένους, which is meant to express it, then not also mean something quite different from crooked? Would not this meaning be also opposed to customary usage? Would not the conjecture of my opponent be exposed to the difficulty to which he thinks mine is exposed, without having a single one of the recommendations which he cannot deny to mine?

To return to the plate in Bellori's collection. If it is proved, from what I have hitherto adduced, that the ancient artists represented Sleep with crossed feet, if it is proved that they gave to Death an exact resemblance to Sleep, they would in all probability not have omitted to depict Death with crossed feet. And how, if this very illustration in Bellori were a proof of this? For it really stands with one foot crossing the other, and this peculiarity of attitude can serve as well, I think, to confirm the meaning of the whole figure, as the elsewhere demonstrated meaning of the latter would suffice to establish the characteristic point of this particular attitude.

But it must be understood that I should not form my conclusions so rapidly and confidently if this were the only ancient monument on which the crossed feet are shown on the figure of Death. For nothing would be more natural than to object to me: "If the ancient artists depicted Sleep with crossed feet, then they only portrayed him as recumbent, as himself a sleeper; from this position of Sleep in sleep little or nothing can be deduced as to his attitude when erect, or still less as to the corresponding posture of his counterpart, Death, and it may be a mere

accident that Death once happens to stand in the manner in which we generally see Sleep sleeping."

This objection could only be obviated by the production of several monuments showing that which I think I discover in the figure engraved by Bellori. I hasten therefore to indicate as many of these as are sufficient for the induction, and believe that it will be deemed no mere superfluous ornamentation if I produce some of the most remarkable of these in illustration.



(1) MONUMENT. (From Boissard)

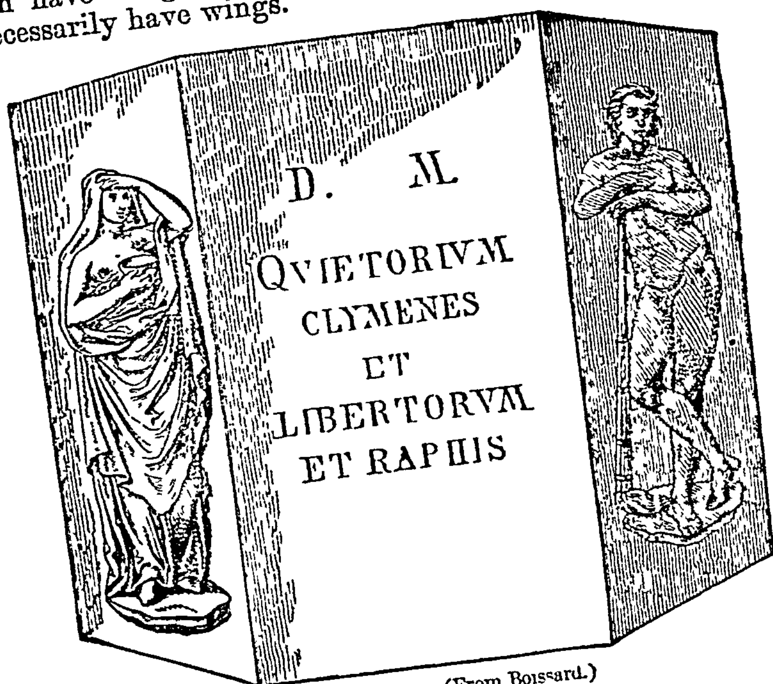
First, therefore, appears the above-named monument in Boissard. Since the express superscription of these figures leaves no room for a misapprehension of their meaning, it may be regarded as the key to all the rest. How does the figure show itself which is here called Somno Orestilia Filia? As a naked youth who casts a mournful look sideways to earth, who leans on a reversed torch, and crosses one foot over the other.

I ought not to omit to mention that there is also a

drawing of this very same monument amongst the papers of Pighius in the Royal Library at Berlin, from which Spanheim has incorporated the single figure of Sleep in his commentary on Kallimachus.[26] That it must be identically the same figure from the same monument given by Boissard is indisputable from the identity of the superscription. But so much more is one astonished at seeing such remarkable differences in the two. The slender grown-up form in Boissard is in Pighius a plump sturdy boy, the latter has wings, the former none; to say nothing of smaller differences in the turn of the head and the position of the arms. How it was that these differences escaped being noticed by Spanheim is conceivable: Spanheim knew the monument only through Gruter's Inscriptions, where he found only the words without any engraving. He did not know or did not remember that the engraving was already published in Boissard, and thus thought that he was imparting something quite unknown, when he furnished it in part from Pighius's papers. It is less easy to excuse Gravius, who in his edition of Gruter's Inscriptions added the design from Boissard,[27] and at the same time did not notice the contradiction between this design and Gruter's verbal description. In the latter the figure is *Genius alatus, crinitus, obesus, dormiens, dextra manu in humerum sinistrum, a quo velum retrorsum dependet, posita*; while in the former it appears frontwise as we see here, and altogether different—not winged, not with really copious hair, not fat, not asleep, and not with the right hand upon the left shoulder. Such discrepancy is scandalous, and cannot but awaken the reader's mistrust, especially when he does not find a word of warning in respect to it. Meanwhile it proves thus much, that the two drawings cannot both be immediately copied from the monument, one of them must necessarily have been drawn from memory. Whether this is Pighius's design or Boissard's can only be decided by one who has opportunity of comparing therewith the monument itself. According to the account of the latter it was to be found in Card. Cesi's palace in Rome But this palace, if I am correctly

[26] At ver. 234 of Hymn. in Delum. Ed Ern. p. 524. [27] P cccıv

informed, was utterly destroyed in the sack of 1527. Several of the antiquities which Boissard there saw might now be in the Farnese Palace; this I assume is the case in respect to the Hermaphrodite and the supposed Head of Pyrrhus.[28] Others I believe I have found again in other cabinets—in short, they are scattered, and it would be difficult to discover the monument of which we are speaking even if it is still in existence. On mere supposition I would just as little declare in favour of Boissard's drawings as of Pighius's. For if it is certain that Sleep can have wings it is just as certain that he need not necessarily have wings.



(ii.)—MONUMENT (From Boissard.)

The second illustration shows the monument of a certain Clymene, also taken from Boissard.[29] One of these

[28] "Hermaphroditus nudus, qui involutum palliolo femur habet—Caput ingens Pyrrhi regis Epirotarum, galeatum, cristatum, et armato pectore" Topogr parte i. pp. 4, 5; Winckelmann's Anmerk. ub. d. Gesch d Kunst, p 98

[29] Par. vi. p. 119.

figures has so much resemblance to the before named, that this resemblance and the place it occupies can no longer leave us in doubt on its account. It can be nothing else but Sleep, and this Sleep, also leaning on a reversed torch, has the feet placed one over the other. It is also without wings, and it would indeed be singular if Boissard had forgotten them here a second time, but as I have said, the ancients may often have represented Sleep without wings. Pausanias does not give any to Sleep in the arms of Night, neither do Statius nor Ovid accord him such in their detailed description of this god and his habitation. Brouckhuysen has been much at fault when he says that the latter poet actually gave Sleep two pairs of wings, one at his head and one at his feet. For although Statius says of him—

> "Ipse quoque et volucrem gressum et ventosa citavit
> Tempora"[30]

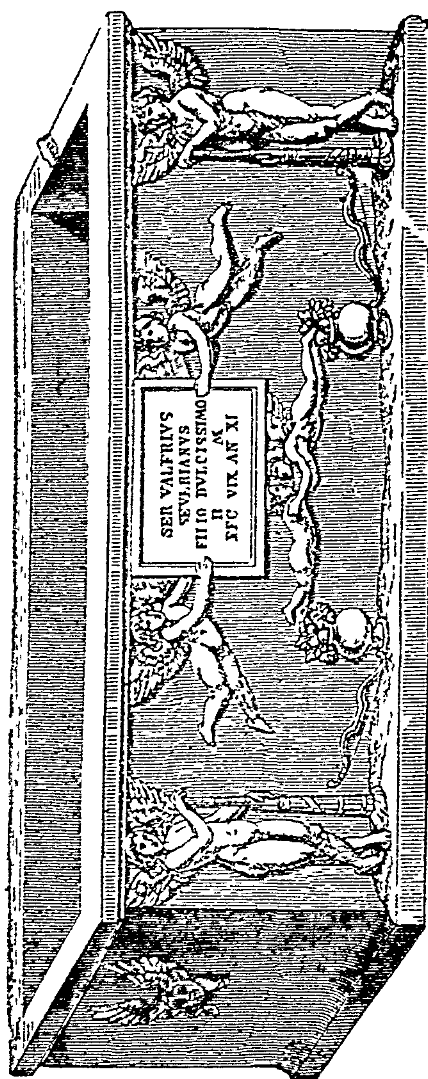
—this is not in the least to be understood of natural wings, but of the winged petasus and the talaria, which the poets bestow not only on Mercury, but frequently also on other deities when they wish to represent them in extraordinary haste. But I am not at all concerned with the wings but the feet of Sleep, and I continue to show the διεστραμμένον of the same on various monuments.

Our third illustration shows a Pila or a sarcophagus, which is again taken from Boissard.[31] The inscription also occurs in Gruter,[32] where the two genii with reversed torches are called two Cupidines. But we are already too conversant with this figure of Sleep to mistake it here. And this Sleep also stands both times with feet crossed. And why is this same figure repeated twice here? Not so much repeated, as doubled, to show image and counter-image. Both are Sleep, the one the transient, the other the long-enduring Sleep, in a word, they are the resembling twin brothers, Sleep and Death. I may conjecture

[30] Ad Tibullum, lib. ii. Eleg. i. v. 89. "Et sic quidem poetæ plerique omnes, videlicet ut alas habuerit hic deus in humeris. Papinius autem, suo quodam jure peculiari, alas ei in pedibus et in capite adfingit." L. 10, Theb. v. 131.

[31] Par. v. p. 115.

[32] Pag. DCCXII.



(III)—SARCOPHAGUS (From Boissard)

that as we see them here, so and not otherwise, they will appear on the monuments mentioned by Winckelmann; on the sepulchral stone of the Palazzo Albani and on the cinerary urn of the Collegium Clementinum. We must not be misled by the bows that here lie at their feet; these may belong to the floating genii just as well as to the standing ones, and I have seen on various monuments an unstrung or even a broken bow, not as the attribute of Amor, but as an image totally unconnected with him, of spent life in general. How a bow could be the image of a good housewife I do not know, and yet an old epitaph, made known by Leich from the unpublished Anthology,[33] says that so it has been:—

Τόξα μὲν αὐδάσει τὰν εὔτονον ἄγετιν οἴκου·

And from this it is at least apparent that it need not of necessity be the weapon of Amor, and that it may mean more than we can explain.

I append a fourth illustration. This is a monument found by Boissard in Rome in St. Angelo ("in Templo Junonis quod est in foro piscatorio"), and where beyond doubt it may still be found.[34] Behind a closed door stands on either side a winged genius, half of whose body projects, and who points with his hand to the closed door. The representation is too expressive not to recall the *domus exilis Plutonia*,[35] from whence no release can be hoped; and who could more fitly be the warders of this eternal prison than Sleep and Death? In the position and action in which we see them no reversed torch is needed to define them more accurately, but the artist has given them the crossed feet. Yet how unnatural this posture would be in this place if it were not expressly meant to be characteristic!

Let it not be thought that these are all the examples I could adduce on my side of the question. Even from Boissard I could bring forward several more, where Death, either as Sleep, or together with Sleep, exhibits the same position of the feet.[36] Maffei too would furnish me with a

[33] Sepulc Car xiv [34] Parte v p. 22.
[35] Tollii Expos Signi vet p. 292
[36] For instance part iii. p. 69, and perhaps also part v. p. 23.

complete harvest of figures such as appear on the first plate.[37]

But to what end this superfluity? Four such monuments, not reckoning that in Bellori, are more than enough to obviate the presumption that that could be a



(iv.)—SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT. (From Boissard.)

mere insignificant accident which is capable of such a deep meaning. At least such an accident would be the most extraordinary that can be imagined! What a coincidence, if certain things were accidentally thus on more than one undoubted antique monument, exactly as I have said that according to my reading of a certain

37 Museo Veron. tab cxxxix.

passage, they must be; or if it were a mere accident that this passage could be so construed as if it had been written with a real view to such monuments. No, chance is not so consistent, and I may maintain without vanity, that consequently my explanation, although it is only *my* explanation, little as may be the credit attaching to it merely on my authority, is yet as completely proved as ever anything of this nature can be proved

Consequently I think it is hardly worth while to clear away this or that trifle which might perhaps occur to a sceptic who will not cease doubting. For instance the lines of Tibullus:—[38]

> "Postque venit tacitus fuscis circumdatus alis
> Somnus et incerto somnia vara pede."

It is true that express mention is here made of Dreams with crooked legs. But Dreams! And if the legs of Dreams were crooked why must Sleep's needs be the same? Because he is the father of Dreams? An excellent reason! And yet that is not the only answer that here occurs to me. For the real one is this the adjective *vara* is certainly not Tibullus's own, it is nothing but an arbitrary reading of Brouckhuysen's. Before this commentator all editions read either *nigra* or *vana*. The latter is the true one, and Brouckhuysen can only have been misled to reject it by the facility of foisting a foreign idea upon his author by altering a single letter. For if the ancient poets often represent Dreams as tottering upon weak uncertain feet, namely deceptive, false dreams, does it follow thence that they must have conceived of these weak uncertain feet as crooked? Why must weak feet needs be crooked, or crooked feet, weak? Moreover the ancients did not regard all dreams as false and deceptive, they believed in a species of very veracious dreams, and Sleep with these, his children, was to them *Futuri certus* as well as *pessimus auctor*.[39] Consequently crooked feet, as the symbol of uncertainty, could not in their apprehension belong to Dreams in general, still less to Sleep, as the universal father of Dreams. And yet I admit all these petty reasons

[38] Lib ii. Eleg. i. v. 89, 90. [39] Senéca Herc. Furens, v 1070.

might be pushed aside if Brouckhuysen, beside the misunderstood passage of Pausanias, had been able to indicate a single one in favour of the crooked feet of Dreams and Sleep. He explains the meaning of *varus* with twenty superfluous passages, but to prove *varus* an epithet of dreams, he adduces no example, but has to make one, and as I have said, not even the single one of Pausanias gives it but it is made out from a false rendering of Pausanias. It is almost ludicrous, when, since he cannot find a bandy-legged Sleep, he tries to show us at least a genius with crooked feet in a passage of Persius,[40] where *genius* means nothing but *indoles* and *varus*, hence nothing more than standing apart

"..... Geminos, horoscope, varo
Producis genio ...."

This digression concerning the διεστραμμένους of Pausanias would have been far too long had it not afforded me an opportunity of bringing forward at the same time various antique representations of Death. For let it be as it may with the crossed feet of Death and his brother; may they be held as characteristic or no; so much is unquestionable from the monuments I have adduced, that the ancient artists always continued to fashion Death with an exact resemblance to Sleep, and it was only that which I wanted to prove here.

For, completely as I myself am convinced of the characteristic element that is contained in this attitude of the feet, I will not therefore insist that no image of Sleep or Death can be without it. On the contrary I can easily conceive an instance in which such an attitude could be at variance with the meaning of the whole and I think I can show examples of such instances. If namely one foot crossing the other is a sign of repose, it can then only duly belong to death that has already taken place; death on the other hand that has still to occur will for that very reason demand another attitude.

In such another attitude, announcing its approach, I think that I recognise Death on a gem in Stephanonius

[40] Sat vi v. 18.

planation of Del Torre, his own idea is equally unhappy. Whence can Maffei prove to us that the ancients represented Lucifer and Hesperus as two distinct beings? They were to them only two names for the same star and for the same mythical personage.[43] Pity that one should venture to guess the most intimate thoughts of antiquity and not know such generally familiar matters! But the more needful must it be to excogitate a new explanation of this excellent work of art; and if I suggest Death and Sleep, I desire to do nothing more than to suggest them. It is palpable that their attitudes are not those of sacrificers; and if one of the torches is to light the sacrifice what means the other in the background? That one figure extinguishes both torches at once, would be very significant according to my conjecture, for in reality Death makes an end to both waking and sleeping. And then, according to this theory the diminutive female figure might not unjustly be interpreted as Night, as the mother of Sleep and Death. For if the kalathus on the head of an Isis or Cybele makes her recognisable as the mother of all things, I should not be astonished to see here Night—

θεῶν γενέτειρα—ἠ δε καὶ ἀνδρῶν,

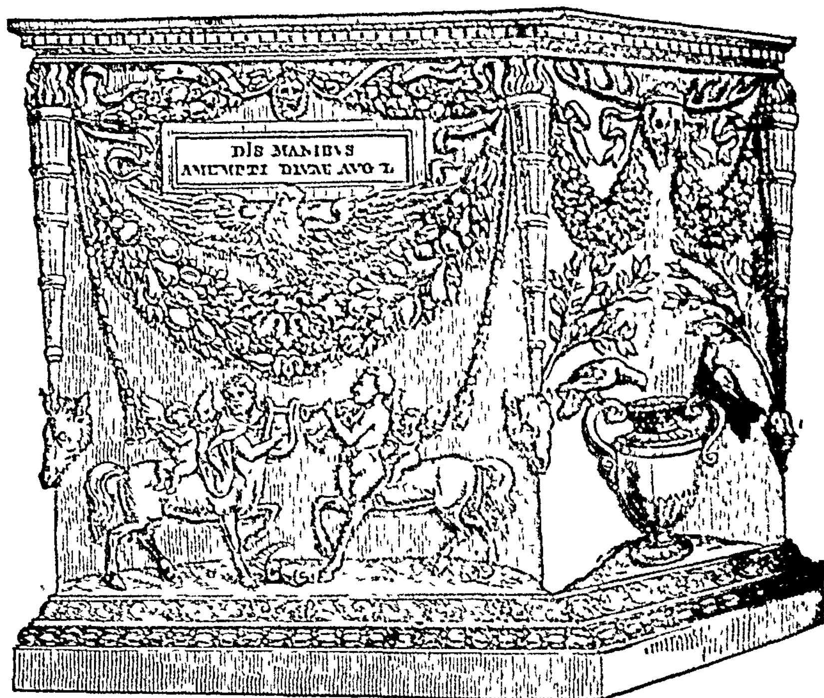
as Orpheus names her, also with the kalathus.

What besides appears most manifestly from the figure of Stephanonius combined with that of Bellori, is this, that the cinerary urn, the butterfly, and the wreath are those attributes by which Death was distinguished from his counterpart Sleep, where and when this was needful. The particular mark of Sleep was on the *other* hand unquestionably a horn.

Some light might be thrown on this by quite another representation on the gravestone of a certain Amemptus, a freed-man of I know not which empress or imperial princess.[44] See the accompanying plate [p. 202]. A male and female Centaur, the first playing on a lyre, the other blowing a double tibia, each bearing a winged boy on

[43] Hyginus, Poet. Astr. lib. ii. cap 42.
[44] Boissardus, par. iii. p 144.

its back, of whom each is blowing a flute; under the upraised foot of the one Centaur lies an urn, under that



MONUMENTAL STONE. (From Boissard.)

of the other a horn. What can this allegory import? What was it to mean here? A man like Herr Klotz, it is true, whose head is full of love-gods, would soon be ready with his answer. These are a pair of Cupids, he would say, and the wise artist has here again shown the triumph of love over the most untamable creatures, a triumph effected by music. Well, well, what could have been more worthy the wisdom of the ancient artists than ever to dally with love, especially in the way that these gentlemen knew love? Meanwhile it still could be possible that even an ancient artist, to speak after their manner, sacrificed less to love and the graces and was in this instance a hundred miles away from thinking of love! It might be possible

that what to their eyes resembles Amor as one drop of water the other, is nothing more playful than Sleep and Death.

In the guise of winged boys the two are no longer strange to us, and the vase on the side of the one and the horn beside the other seems to me not much less expressive than their actual written names would be. I know well that the vase and the horn might only be drinking vessels, and that in antiquity the Centaurs were no mean topers, wherefore on various works they appear in the train of Bacchus and even draw his car.[45] But why in this capacity did they require to be indicated by attributes? and is it not far more in keeping with the place to explain this vase, this horn as the attributes of Sleep and Death which they had of necessity to throw aside in order to manage their flutes?

If however I name the vase or urn as the attribute of Death, I do not mean thereby the actual cinerary urn, the *Ossuarium* or *Cinerarium*, or however else the vase was called in which the remains of the cremated bodies were preserved. I include under it also the λήκυθοι, the vessels of every kind that were placed in the earth with the dead bodies that were buried entire, without entering upon the question what may have been contained in these bottles. A corpse about to be buried among the Greeks was as little left without such a vessel as without a wreath, which is very clearly shown in various passages of Aristophanes among others,[46] so that it is quite intelligible how both became attributes of Death.

There is still less doubt regarding the horn as an attri-

[45] Gemme antiche colle sposizioni di P. A. Maffei, parte iii p 58

[46] Especially in the Ecclesiazusæ, where Blepyrus scolds his Praxagora for having got up secretly at night and gone *out* in his clothes (l 537–8)—

ᾤχου καταλιποῦσ' ὡσπερεὶ προκείμενον,
Μόνον οὐ στεφανώσασ', οὐδ' ἐπιθεῖσα λήκυθον.

The scholiast adds thereto. *Εἰώθασι γὰρ ἐπὶ νεκρῶν τοῦτο ποιεῖν.* Compare in the same play the lines 1022–27, where the Greek funeral customs are to be found together. That such vessels (λήκυθοι) which were placed beside the dead, were painted, and that it was not precisely the great masters who occupied themselves with this branch of the art is clear from lines 987–88 Tanaquil Faber seems to have

bute of Sleep. The poets refer to this horn in innumerable passages. Out of a full horn he pours his blessing over the eyelids of the weary—

> "Illos post vulnera fessos
> Exceptamque hiemem, cornu perfuderat omni
> Somnus;"

with an emptied horn he follows departing Night into his grotto—

> "Et Nox, et cornu fugiebat Somnus inani."

And as the poets beheld him the artists depicted him.[47] Only the double horn, wherewith the extravagant imagination of Romeyn de Hooghe has overburdened him, is known neither by the one nor the other.[48]

Granted therefore that it might be Sleep and Death who here sit on the Centaurs, what would be the meaning of their combined representation? If I have happily guessed a part, must I therefore be able to explain the whole? Perhaps however the secret is not very profound. Perhaps Amemptus was a musician especially skilled in the instruments we here behold in the hands of these subterrene beings, for Centaurs also had their abode at the gates of Hades according to the later poets—

> "Centauri in foribus stabulant"

—and it was quite common to place on the monument of an artist the implements of his art, which here would not have been devoid of a delicate complimentary significance.

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believed that they were not really painted vessels that were buried with the dead, but that such vessels were painted round about them, for he notes at the last place "Quod autem lecythi mortuis appingerentur, aliunde ex Aristophane innotuit" I wish he would have given his reference for this *aliunde*

[47] Servius ad Æneid vi. v 233. "Somnum cum cornu novimus pingi Lutatius apud Barthium ad Thebaid vi v 27 Nam sic a pictoribus simulatur, ut liquidum somnium ex cornu super dormientes videatur effundere."

[48] Denkbilder der alten Volker, p. 193, German translation.

I cannot however express myself otherwise than hesitatingly concerning this monument in general. For I see myself once again perplexed as to how far Boissard may be relied upon. The drawing is Boissard's, but before him Smetius had published the inscription with an additional line,[49] and had appended a verbal description of the figures surrounding it. Smetius says of the principal figures: "Inferius Centauri duo sunt, alter mas, lyncea instratus, lyram tangens, cui Genius alatus, fistula, Germanicæ modernæ simili, canens insidet; alter fœmina, fistulis duabus simul in os insertis canens, cui alter Genius fœmineus alis papilionum, manibus nescio quid concutiens, insidet. Inter utrumque cantharus et cornu Bacchicum projecta jacent." All is exact, except the genius borne by the female Centaur. According to Smetius this one should also be of female sex, and have butterfly wings and strike something together with her hands According to Boissard this figure is no more winged than its companion, and instead of cymbals or perhaps of a Crotalum, he plays upon the same kind of wind instrument as the other. It is sad to notice such contradictions so often. They must from time to time make antiquarian studies very repugnant to a man who does not willingly build on quicksand.

Nevertheless even if Smetius saw more correctly than Boissard, I should not therefore wholly abandon my explanation. For then the female genius with butterfly wings would be a Psyche, and if Psyche is the picture of the soul, then we must here see instead of Death the soul of the dead. To this also the attribute of the urn would be appropriate, and the attribute of the horn would still indicate Sleep.

I imagine moreover that I have discovered Sleep elsewhere than on sepulchral monuments, and especially in a company where one would scarcely have expected to find him. Among the train of Bacchus, namely, there appears not rarely a boy or genius with a cornucopia, and I do not know that any one has as yet thought it worth

[49] Which names those who erected this monument to Amemptus, LALVS ET CORINTHVS L V. Gruteri Corp. Inscr. p dcvi. edit. Græc.

his while to identify this figure. It is, for instance, on the well-known gem of Baggaris, now in the collection of the King of France, the explanation of which Casaubon first gave, and it was noticed by him and all subsequent commentators,[50] but not one of them knew what to say of it beyond what is obvious to the eye, and a genius with a cornucopia has remained a genius with a cornucopia. I venture to pronounce him to be Sleep. For as has been proved, Sleep is a diminutive genius, the attribute of Sleep is a horn, and what companion could an intoxicated Bacchus desire rather than Sleep? That it was usual for the ancient artists to couple Bacchus with Sleep, is shown by the pictures of Sleep with which Statius decked his palace[51]

> "Mille intus simulacra dei cælaverat ardens,
> Mulciber. Hic hæret lateri redimita voluptas,
> Hic comes in requiem vergens labor. Est ubi Baccho,
> Est ubi Martigenæ socium pulvinar amori
> Obtinet. Interius tectum in penetralibus altis,
> Et cum Morte jacet: nullique ea tristis imago."[52]

Nay, if an ancient inscription may be trusted, or rather if this inscription is ancient enough, Bacchus and Sleep were even worshipped in common as the two greatest and sweetest sustainers of human life.

It is not in place here to pursue this trace more keenly. Neither is the present occasion opportune for treating more amply my special theme and seeking far and wide for further proofs of the ancients having depicted Death as Sleep, and Sleep as Death, now alone, now together, now with, now without certain attributes Those instanced, even if others could not be hunted out, sufficiently confirm what they are designed to confirm, and I may pass on without scruple to the second point which contains the refutation of the one single counter-proposition.

[50] See Lippert's Dakt i. 366

[51] Thebaid xv 100 Barth need not have been so chary as to omit commenting on these lines because they are omitted in some of the best MSS He has spent his learning on worse verses.

[52] Corp. Inscript. p. lxvii. 8.

II. I say . the ancient artists, when they represented a skeleton, meant thereby something quite different from Death. as the deity of Death. I prove therefore (1) that they did not thereby mean Death, and show (2) what they did mean.

1. It never occurred to me to deny that they represented skeletons. According to Herr Klotz's words I must have denied it, and denied it for the reason that they refrained in general from portraying ugly or disagreeable objects. For he says, I should beyond question resolve the examples thereof on engraved gems into allegory, which thus relieves them from the higher law of beauty. If I needed to do this, I need only add, that the figures on gravestones and cinerary urns belong no less to allegory, and thus of all his cited examples there would only remain the two brazen figures in the Kircherian Museum and the gallery at Florence, which can really not be reckoned among works of art as I understand that term in the 'Laokoon.'

But wherefore these civilities towards him? As far as he is concerned I need simply deny the faults of which he accuses me. I have nowhere said that the ancient artists represented no skeletons, I only said that they did not depict Death as a skeleton. It is true, I thought that I might doubt the genuine antiquity of the bronze skeleton at Florence; but I added: "It cannot at any rate be meant to represent Death because the ancients depicted him differently." Herr Klotz withholds this additional sentence from his readers, and yet everything depends upon it. For it shows that I will not exactly deny that of which I doubt. It shows that my meaning has only been this · if the image in question is to represent Death, as Spence maintains, it is not antique, and if it is antique, then it does not represent Death.

I was already acquainted with several skeletons or antique works and now I know of several more than the luckless industry or the boastful indolence of Herr Klotz has been able to produce.

For in fact those which he cites, all except one, are already to be found in Winckelmann [53] and that he here

[53] Allegorie, p 81.

only copied from him is apparent from an error common to them both. Winckelmann writes: "I here note that skeletons are only extant on two ancient monuments and urns of marble in Rome, the one is in the Villa Medici, the other in the Museo of the Collegio Romano. Another with a skeleton is to be found in Spon, but is no longer in Rome." He refers to Spon concerning the former of those skeletons which still stands in the Villa Medici (Spon, *Rech. d'Antiq.* p. 93) and concerning the third, which is no longer extant in Rome, to the same scholar's *Miscell. Ant.* p. 7. Now this and that with Spon are one and the same, and if that which Spon cites in his *Recherches* still stands in the Villa Medici, then that in his *Miscellanées* is certainly also still in Rome and is to be seen in the same villa on the same spot. Spon however, I must remark, did not see it in the Villa Medici, but in the Villa Madama.

As little therefore as Winckelmann can have compared the two quotations from Spon, as little has Herr Klotz done so, else he would not have referred me, to excess, as he says, to the two marbles quoted by Winckelmann in his essay on allegory and immediately after have also named the monument in Spon. One of these is, as I have said, counted twice over, and this he must permit me to deduct.

In order however that he may not be annoyed at this subtraction, I will at once place half a dozen other skeletons at his service in lieu of the one I have taken away. It is game that I myself do not preserve, that has only accidentally strayed into my domains, and with which I am consequently very liberal. To begin with, I have the honour to bring before him three all together. They are upon a stone from the Daktyliotheca of Andreini in Florence to be found in Gori.[54] The fourth this same Gori will exhibit to him on an old marble likewise in Florence.[55] The fifth he will encounter, if my information is not at fault, in Fabretti,[56] and the sixth upon the

[54] Inscript antiq. quæ in Etruriæ urbibus exstant, par i. p. 455.
[55] *Ibid* p 382. "Tabula, in qua sub titulo sculptum est canistrum, binæ corollæ, fœmina cornu mensa tripode in lectisternio decumbens, Pluto quadriga vectus animam rapiens, præeunte Mercurio petasato et caduceato, qui rotundam domum intrat, prope quam jacet sceletus."
[56] Inscript cap. i n. 17, quoted by Gori from the above.

second of the two gems of Stosch of which he only brings forward one out of Lippert's[57] impressions.

What a wretched study is the study of antiquity if its subtlety depends on such knowledge; when the most learned therein is he who can most easily and exhaustively count up such trivialities on his fingers!

But it seems to me it has a more dignified side, this study. An antiquarian is one thing and an archæologist another! The former has inherited the fragments the latter the spirit of antiquity. The former scarcely thinks with his eyes, the latter sees even with his thoughts. Before the former can say "Thus it was," the latter already knows whether it could be so.

The former may pile together yet seventy and seven more such artistic skeletons out of his rubbish heap, to prove that the ancients represented Death as a skeleton; the latter will shrug his shoulders at this short-sighted industry and will continue to say what he said before he knew all this baggage; either they are not as old as they are thought to be, or they are not that which they are proclaimed.

Putting the question of age aside as not decided or as not capable of decision, what reason have we for saying that these skeletons represent Death?

Because we moderns represent Death as a skeleton? We moderns still in part depict Bacchus as fat and paunchy. Was this therefore also the representation which the ancients gave of him? If a bas-relief were found of the birth of Hercules and we saw a woman with folded hands, *digitis pectinatim inter se implexis* sitting before a door, should we perhaps say this woman is praying to Juno Lucina that she may aid Alkmene to a quick and happy deliverance? But do not we pray in this manner? This reasoning is so wretched that one feels ashamed to attribute it to any one. Moreover too the moderns do not portray Death as a mere skeleton; they give him a scythe or something of the kind in his hand, and this scythe it is that converts the skeleton into Death.

If we are to believe that the ancient skeletons represented Death, we must be convinced, either by the repre-

[57] Descript. des Pierres gr p 517, n 241.

sentation itself or by the express testimony of ancient writers. But neither the one nor the other are forthcoming. Not even the faintest, the most indirect testimony can be adduced for this.

I call indirect testimonies the references and pictures of the poets Where is there the faintest trace in any Greek or Roman poet which could ever allow us to suspect that he found Death represented as a skeleton or so thought of it himself?

Pictures of Death are frequent among the poets and often very terrible. He is the pale, pallid, sallow Death;[58] he roams abroad on black wings,[59] he bears a sword;[60] he gnashes hungry teeth;[61] he suddenly opens a voracious jaw;[62] he has bloody nails with which he indicates his destined prey,[63] his form is so large and monstrous that he overshadows a whole battlefield,[64] that he hurries off with entire cities[65] But where in all this is there even a suspicion of a skeleton? In one of Euripides' tragedies he is even introduced among the acting personages; and there too he is the sad, terrible, inexorable Death. Yet even there he is far removed from appearing as a skeleton, although we know that the mechanism of the ancient stage did not hesitate to terrify the spectators with yet more horrible figures There is no apparent trace of his being indicated otherwise than by his black vesture,[66] and by the steel with which he cut off the hair of the dying, thus dedicating them to the infernal gods.[67] Perhaps he may have had wings[68]

[58] "Pallida, lurida Mors"

[59] "Atris circumvolat alis," Horat Sat ii 1. v. 58

[60] "Fila sororum ense metit," Statius, Theb i v 633.

[61] "Mors avidis pallida dentibus," Seneca, Her Fur.

[62] "Avidos oris hiatus pandit," Idem, Œdipo

[63] "Præcipuos annis animisque cruento ungue notat," Statius, Theb viii v 380

[64] "Fruitur cœlo, bellatoremque volando campum operit," *Ibid* viii v 378

[65] "Captam tenens fert manibus urbem," *Ibid* lib i v. 633

[66] Alcest v 843, where Hercules names him Ἄνακτα τὸν μελάμπεπλον νεκρῶν

[67] *Ibid* v. 75, 76, where he says of himself—

ἱερὸς γὰρ οὗτος τῶν κατὰ χθονὸς θεῶν,
ὅτου τόδ' ἔγχος κράτος ἁγνίσει τρίχα

[68] If the πτέρωτος ὄδας in the 261st line is to be understood of him

But may not some of these shots recoil on myself? If it be admitted to me that in the pictures of the poets nothing is seen of this skeleton; must I not in return admit that they are nevertheless far too terrible to exist together with that image of Death which I believe that I have discovered among the ancient artists? If a conclusion drawn from that which is not to be found in the poet's pictures be valid for the material pictures of art; will not a similar conclusion drawn from that which is found in these pictures be valid also?

I answer, No; this conclusion is not as entirely valid in this case as in the other. Poetical pictures are of immeasurably wider range than the pictures of art. and especially in the personification of an abstract idea, art can only express that which is general and essential to it. It must renounce all the accidents which would form exceptions to this universality, which stand in opposition to this essential quality, for such accidents in the thing itself would make the thing itself unrecognisable, and to be recognised is its aim above all things. The poet, on the contrary, who elevates their personified abstract idea into the class of acting personages, can allow him to act up to a certain point contrary to this idea and can introduce him in all the modifications that any especial case offers, without our losing sight in the least of his actual nature.

Hence, if art wishes to make the personified idea of Death recognisable by us, by what must she, by what else can she do so, than by that which is common to Death in all possible cases? And what else is this but the condition of repose and insensibility? The more she would desire to express contingencies which in a single case might banish the idea of this rest and insensibility, the more unrecognisable her picture must necessarily become, unless she resorts to the addition of some word, or some conventional sign, which is no better than a word and will thus cease to be pictorial art. The poet need not fear this For him language has already elevated abstract ideas to the rank of independent beings, and the same word never ceases to awaken the same idea, however many contradictory contingencies he may unite with it. He may describe Death as never so painful, so terrible, so

cruel, we do not therefore forget that it is only Death, and that such a horrible shape does not belong to him essentially, but only under similar circumstances.

The condition of being dead has nothing terrible, and in so far as dying is merely the passage to being dead, dying can have nothing terrible. Only to die thus and thus, at this moment, in this mood, according to the will of this or that person, to die with shame and agony, may be terrible and becomes terrible. But is it then the dying, is it Death, which has caused the terror? Nothing less; Death is the desired end of all these horrors, and it is only to be imputed to the poverty of language if it calls both conditions, the condition which leads unavoidably to Death, and the condition of Death itself, by one and the same name. I know that this poverty can often become a source of pathos and that the poets thus derive advantage from it, but still that language unquestionably merits the preference that despises a pathos which is founded on the confusion of such diverse matters, and which itself obviates such confusion by distinctive appellations Such a language it appears was the ancient Greek, the language of Homer. Κήρ is one thing to Homer and *θάνατος* another, for he would not so frequently have combined *θάνατος* and *κήρ* if both were meant to express only one and the same thing By *κήρ* he understands the necessity of dying, what may often be a sad, an early, violent, shameful, inopportune death; by *θάνατος* natural death, which is preceded by no *κήρ*, or the condition of being dead without any reference to the preceding *κήρ*

The Romans too made a distinction between *lethum* and *mors*.

> "Emergit late Ditis chorus, horrida Erinnys,
> Et Bellona minax, facibusque armata Megæra,
> Lethumque, Insidiæque, et lurida Mortis imago"

—says Petronius. Spence thinks it is difficult to understand this distinction; but that perhaps by *lethum* they understood the general principle or the source of mortality, which they supposed to have its proper residence in Hell, and by *mors* or *mortes* the immediate cause of each particular instance of mortality

on our earth.[69] I, for my part, would sooner take that *lethum* is to denote rather the manner of dying, and *mors* Death originally and in general, for Statius says:[70]

"Mille modis lethi miseros Mors una fatigat."

The modes of dying are endless; but there is only one Death. Consequently *lethum* would completely answer to the Greek κήρ, and *mors* to θάνατος, without prejudice to the fact that in the one language as well as in the other, both words became confounded in time and were finally employed as entirely synonymous

However I will here also imagine to myself an opponent who contests every step of the field. Such a one might say: "I will allow the distinction between κήρ and θάνατος, but if the poets, if language itself have distinguished between a terrible death and one that is not terrible, why then may not Art be permitted to have a similar double image for Death? The less terrible image may have been the genius who rests on his reversed torch, with his various attributes; and consequently this genius was a θάνατος. How stands it with the image of Κήρ? If this had to be terrible, then perhaps it was a skeleton, and we should then still be permitted to say, that the ancients represented Death, *i e.* violent death, for which our language lacks a name, by means of a skeleton.

It is certainly true that the ancient artists also accepted the abstraction of Death from the terrors that precede it and represented the latter under the especial image of Κήρ. But how could they have chosen for their representation something which only ensues long after death? A skeleton would have been as unsuitable for this as possible. Whosoever is not satisfied with this reasoning, let him look at the fact. Fortunately Pausanias has

[69] Polymetis, p. 261: "The Roman poets sometimes make a distinction between Lethum and Mors which the poverty of our language will not allow us to express. Perhaps he meant by Lethum, that general principle or source of mortality, which they supposed to have its proper residence in hell, and by Mors, or Mortes (for they had several of them) the immediate cause of each particular instance of mortality on our earth."

[70] Thebaid. ix. v. 280.

preserved for us the image under which this Κήρ was depicted. It appeared as a woman with horrible teeth and crooked nails, like to a wild beast. Thus was she represented upon the cist of Kypselus in which Death and Sleep rested in the arms of Night, behind Polyneikes when his brother Eteokles attacks him. *τοῦ Πολυνείκους δὲ ὄπισθεν ἕστηκεν ὀδόντας τε ἔχουσα οὐδὲν ἡμερωτέρους θηρίου, καὶ οἱ καὶ τῶν χείρων εἰσὶν ἐπικαμπεῖς οἱ ὄνυχες· ἐπίγραμμά δε ἐπ' αὐτῇ εἶναί φασι Κῆρα.*[71] A substantive seems wanting in the text before *ἕστηκεν*, but it would be a mere quibble if we affected to doubt that it must be *γυνή*. Anyway it cannot be *σκελετός*, and that is enough for me.

Herr Klotz has already once before wanted to employ this image of Κήρ against my assertion as to the manner in which Death was depicted by the ancients,[72] and now he knows what I could have replied to him. Κήρ is not Death, and it is mere poverty in those languages where it has to pass for it by a circumlocution and with the addition of the word Death. So distinct an idea ought to have a word for itself in all languages. And yet Herr Klotz should not have praised Kulmius for translating *κήρ* by *mors fatalis*. It would be more correct and exact to say *fatum mortale, mortiferum*, for in Suidas *κήρ* is explained by *θανατηφόρος μοῖρα*, not by *θάνατος πεπρωμένος*.

Finally I will remind my readers of the euphemisms of the ancients and their delicacy in exchanging such words as might immediately awaken disagreeable, sad, horrible ideas for less shocking ones. If in consequence of this euphemism they did not distinctly say "he is dead" but rather "he has lived, he has been, he has gone to the majority"[73] and such like; if one of the reasons of this delicacy consisted in avoiding as far as might be words of evil omen; then there can be no doubt that the artists too

[71] Lib. v. cap. 19, p. 425, ed. Kuhn.

[72] Ad Litt. vol. iii. p. 288: "Considerem quasdam figuras arcæ Cypseli in templo Olympico insculptas. Inter eas apparet *γυνή, ὀδόντας, κ.τ.λ.* Verbum *κῆρα* recte explicat Kuhnius mortem fatalem, eoque loco refutari posse videtur Auctoris opinio de minus terribili forma morti ab antiquis tributa, cui sententiæ etiam alia monimenta adversari videntur."

[73] Gattakerus, de novi Instrumenti stylo, cap. xix. [London, 1648].

would tone down their language to this gentler pitch. They too would not have presented Death under an image unavoidably calling up before the beholder loathsome ideas of decay and corruption, the image of the ugly skeleton; for in their compositions too the unexpected sight of such an image could have become as ominous as the unexpected hearing of the actual word. They too therefore will rather have chosen an image, which leads us to that of which it is emblematic by an agreeable bypath; and what image could be more suited to this, than that whose symbolic expression language itself likes to employ as the designation of Death, the image of Sleep?

"*Nullique ea tristis imago.*"

But euphemism does not banish words from a language, does not necessarily thrust them out of usage because it exchanges them for gentler ones It rather employs these repulsive and therefore avoided words, instead of the less offensive ones, on a more terrible occasion. Thus, for example, it says of him who died quietly, that he no longer lives, so it would say of him who had been murdered under the most horrible tortures, that he had died, and in like manner, Art will not wholly banish from her domain those images by which she might indicate Death but which on account of their horrors she does not willingly employ, but will rather reserve them for such occasions in which they are the more appropriate, or even the only serviceable ones.

Therefore, since it is proved that the ancients did not represent Death by a skeleton, and since nevertheless skeletons are to be seen on ancient monuments; what are they then, these skeletons?

Without circumlocution these skeletons are *Larvæ*; and that not inasmuch as *Larva* itself means nothing else but a skeleton, but inasmuch as under *Larvæ* a kind of departed souls was understood.

The ordinary pneumatology of the ancients was as follows. Besides the gods, they believed in an innumerable race of created spirits, whom they named Dæmons. Among these Dæmons they also reckoned the departed souls of men, which they comprehended under the general name of *Lemures* and of which there could not well be

otherwise than two kinds; departed souls of good and of bad men The good became peaceful, blissful household gods for their posterity and were named *Lares* The bad, in punishment of their crimes, wandered like restless fugitives about the earth, an empty terror to the pious, a blighting terror to the impious, and were named *Larvæ*. In the uncertainty whether a departed soul were of the first or second kind, the word *Manes*[74] was employed.

And I say, that such *Larvæ*, such departed souls of bad men were represented as skeletons. I am convinced that this remark is new from the point of view of art and has not been used by any archæologist in explanation of ancient monuments People will therefore require to see it proved, and it might not be sufficient if I referred to a commentary of Herr Stephanus, according to which in an old epigram οἱ σκελετοί is to be explained by *Manes*. But what this commentary only lets us guess, the following words will place beyond doubt. Seneca says.[75] "Nemo tam puer est, ut Cerberum timeat, et tenebras, et Larvarum habitum nudis ossibus cohærentium," or as our old honest and thoroughly German Michael Herr translated "Es ist niemands so kindisch, der den Cerberus forcht, die Finsterniss und die todten Gespenst, da nichts dann die leidigen Bein an einander hangen"[76] ("No one is so childish as to fear Cerberus, darkness and dead spectres hanging together by nothing but bare bones"). How could a

[74] Apuleius, de Deo Socratis (p 110, edit Bas per Hen Petri)· "Est et secundo signatu species dæmonum, animus humanus exutus et liber, stipendiis vitæ corpore suo abjuratis Hunc vetere Latina lingua reperio Lemurem dictitatum Ex hisce ergo Lemuribus, qui posterorum suorum curam sortitus, pacato et quieto numine domum possidet Lar dicitur familiaris Qui vero propter adversa vitæ merita, nullis bonis sedibus incerta vagatione, ceu quodam exilio punitur, inane terriculamentum bonis hominibus, cæterum noxium malis, hunc plerique Larvam perhibent Cum vero incertum est quæ cuique sortitio evenerit, utrum Lar sit an Larva, nomine Manium deum nuncupant, et honoris gratia Dei vocabulum additum est"

[75] Epist xxiv.

[76] Sittliche Zuchtbucher des hochberuhmten Philosophen Seneca, Strasburg 1536, in folio A later translator of Seneca, Conrad Fuchs (Frankfort 1620) renders the words "et Larvarum habitum nudis ossibus cohærentium" by "und der Todten gebeinichte Companey." Very elegant and mad!

skeleton, a framework, be more distinctly indicated, than by *nudis ossibus cohœrens?* How could it be more emphatically expressed that the ancients were accustomed to conceive and to figure their haunting spirits as skeletons?

If such an observation affords a more natural explanation for misunderstood representations, this is unquestionably a new proof of their justice. Only a single skeleton on an ancient monument might certainly be Death if it had not been proved on other grounds that he was not so depicted. But how, when many such skeletons appear? May we say that, even as the poet knew various Deaths—

"Stant Furiæ circum, variæque ex ordine Mortes"

—so it must also be permitted to the artist to represent various forms of death as a separate Death? And if even then no sound sense can be made of such a composition consisting of various skeletons? I have referred above to a stone in Gori[77] on which three skeletons are to be seen; the one drives on a biga drawn by fierce animals, over another prostrate on the ground, and threatens to drive over a third that stands in its way. Gori calls this representation the triumph of Death over Death. Words without sense. But happily this gem is of bad workmanship and filled up with characters intended to pass for Greek, but which make no sense. Gori therefore pronounces it the work of a Gnostic, and people have taken leave from all time to lay as many absurdities as they do not care to explain to their account. Instead of seeing Death triumphing over himself, or over a few rivals envious of his dominion, I see nothing but departed souls, in the form of *Larvæ*, who still cling in the other life to those occupations which were so pleasant to them in this. That this was the case was a commonly received opinion with the ancients, and Virgil has not forgotten the love of racing among the examples he gives of this[78]

"——quæ gratia currûm
Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos."

[77] See above, p 208. [78] Æneid. vi. v. 653.

Therefore nothing is more common on monuments and urns and sarcophagi than genii, who exercise—

"——aliquas artes, antiquæ irritamina vitæ,"

and in the very work of Gori, in which he adduces this gem, a marble occurs of which the gem might be almost called the caricature The skeletons that on the gem drive and are driven over, are, on the marble, genii.

Now if the ancients did not conceive of the *Larvæ, i.e.* the departed souls of wicked men otherwise than as skeletons, then it was quite natural that finally every skeleton, even if it was only a work of art, should be called *Larva.* Hence *Larva* was also the name of that skeleton which appeared at solemn banquets, to stimulate a more hasty enjoyment of life. The passage in Petronius concerning such a skeleton is well known,[79] but the conclusion it might be sought to deduce, that it is a representation of Death, would be very precipitate. Because a skeleton reminded the ancients of Death, was a skeleton therefore the received image of Death? The saying which Trimalcus utters rather distinguishes expressly the skeleton and Death.

"Sic erimus cuncti, postquam nos auferet Orcus."

That does not mean, "This one will soon carry us off," "In this form Death will claim us," but "This is what we must all become, and skeletons we shall all be when Death has claimed us."

And thus I think that I have proved in all ways what I promised to prove But I still wish to show that I have not taken this trouble only against Herr Klotz To put Herr Klotz alone right might seem to most readers an equally

[79] "Potentibus ergo, et accuratissimas nobis lautitias mirantibus, larvam argenteam attulit servus sic aptatam, ut articuli ejus vertebræque laxatæ in omnem partem verterentur. Hanc quum super mensam semel iterumque abjecisset, et catenatio mobilis aliquot figuras exprimeret Trimalcio adjecit—

Heu, heu, nos miseros, quam totus homuncio nil est!
Sic erimus cuncti, postquam nos auferet Orcus.
Ergo vivamus, dum licet esse bene."

(Edit. Mich -Hadr. p. 115)

easy and useless occupation. It is something different if he has gone astray along with the whole flock. Then it is not the hindermost bleating sheep, but the flock that puts the shepherd or his dog in motion.

PROOF.

I WILL therefore glance at better scholars who, as I have said, share more or less in the erroneous imaginations of Herr Klotz, and will commence with a man who is all in all to Herr Klotz, his departed friend, Count Caylus. What lovely souls those must be who at once declare as their friend. one with whom they have exchanged a few compliments at the distance of a hundred miles! It is only a pity that we can just as easily become their enemy!

Among the subjects recommended to artists out of Homer, by Count Caylus, was that of Apollo delivering the purified and embalmed corpse of Sarpedon to Death and Sleep.[80]

The Count says: "It is only vexatious that Homer did not enter upon the attributes that were at his time accorded to Sleep. To designate this god, we only know his actions and we crown him with poppies. These ideas are modern, and the first, which is altogether of minor use, cannot be employed in the present instance, in which even flowers seem to me quite unsuitable, especially for a figure that is to group with Death"[81] I will not repeat here what I have said in the 'Laokoon,' concerning the want of taste of the Count who demands from Homer that he should deck the creatures of his mind with the attributes of the artists. I will only note here how little he himself knew these attributes, and how inexperienced he was in the actual representation of both Death and Sleep. As to the first it is incontrovertibly shown from his words that he believed Death could and must be represented as nothing else but a skeleton. He would not otherwise have observed complete silence concerning its figure, as

[80] Iliad. π. v. 681

[81] Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, &c.

on a subject that was self-evident; still less would he have remarked that a figure crowned with flowers could not be well assorted with the figure of Death. This apprehension could only arise from the fact that he had never dreamed of the resemblance of both figures, having pictured Death to himself as an ugly monster, and Sleep as a gentle genius. Had he known that Death was a like gentle genius, he would surely have reminded his artists of this, and could only have discussed with them, whether it be well to give these allied genii distinctive attributes and which would be the most becoming. But in the second place, he did not even know Sleep as he should have known him. It is rather too much ignorance to say, that except by his action he only indicates this deity by baleful poppies. He indeed justly notes that both these symbols are modern, but he not only does not say what were the old genuine symbols, but he also totally denies that such have been handed down to us. He therefore knew nothing of the horn which the poets so often ascribe to Sleep, and with which he was depicted according to the express testimony of Servius and Lutatius. He knew nothing of the reversed torch; he did not know that a figure with such a reversed torch was extant from ancient times, which was announced as Sleep, not by a mere conjecture, but by its own undoubted superscription. He had not found this figure either in Boissard, or Gruter, or Spanheim, or Beger, or Brouckhuysen,[82] and heard nothing of it in any quarter. Now let us imagine the Homeric picture, as he would have it with a Sleep, as if it was the awakened sleep of Algardi; with a Death, a very little more graceful than he bounds about in old German Death-Dances. What is ancient, Greek, Homeric in this? What is there that is not fanciful, Gothic, and French? Would not this picture of how Homer thought, according to Caylus, bear the same likeness to the original as Hudart's translation? Still it would only be the fault of the

[82] Brouckhuysen has incorporated it in his Tibullus from Spanheim, but Beger, as I should have noted above, p. 192, has made known the whole monument, out of which this single figure is taken. This he has done from the papers of Pighius in his Spicilegio Antiquitatis, p. 106. Beger as little refers to Spanheim, as Spanheim to Beger.

artist's adviser, if he became so offensively and romantically modern, whereas he might be so simple and suggestive, so graceful and great, in the true spirit of antiquity How he should feel allured to put forth all his powers upon two such advantageous figures as winged genii, to make what is similar different, and what is different similar, alike in growth, form, and mien; yet as unlike in hue and flesh as the general tone of his colouring will allow. For according to Pausanias the one of these twins was black, the other white. I say, the one and the other, because it is not actually clear from the words of Pausanias, which was the white one and which the black. And though I should not marvel if an artist made the black one to be Death, yet I could not therefore assure him that he must be in unquestioned agreement with antiquity. Nonnus, at least, calls Sleep μελανόχρουν, when Venus shows herself inclined not to force such a black spouse upon the white Pasithea,[83] and it is quite possible that the ancient artists gave the white hue to Death, thus to indicate that he was not the more terrible Sleep of the two.

Truly, Caylus could learn little if at all better from the well-known iconological works of a Ripa, a Chartarius and however their copyists may be called.

Ripa,[84] it is true, knew the horn of Sleep, but how erroneously he decks him out in other respects! The shorter white tunic over a black dress which he and Chartarius[85] give to him, belongs to Dreams and not to Sleep. Ripa knew the passage in Pausanias concerning the resemblance of Death and Sleep, but without making the least use of this for his picture He proposes three kinds, and none of these are such as a Greek or Roman would have recognised. Nevertheless only one of them, the invention of Camillo da Ferrara, is a skeleton; but I doubt whether Ripa means to say by this that it was this Camillo who first painted Death as a skeleton. I do not however know this Camillo.

Those who have made most use of Ripa are Giraldus and Natalis Comes.

[83] Lib xxxiii. v. 40. [84] Iconolog p 464, edit Rom. 1603.
[85] Imag Deorum, p 143, Francof. 1687

They copied the error about the white and black dress of Sleep from Giraldus,[86] and Giraldus can only have looked at a translation, instead of at Philostratus himself. For it is not Ὕπνος but Ὄνειρος, of whom Philostratus says.[87] ἐν ἀνειμένῳ τῷ εἴδει γέγραπται, καὶ ἐσθῆτα ἔχει λευκὴν ἐπὶ μελαίνῃ τὸ, οἶμαι, νύκτωρ αὐτοῦ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν. It is incomprehensible to me how even the latest translator of Philostratus' works, Gottfried Olearius, who assures us that he has given us an almost wholly new rendering, could have been so extremely careless with these words. They run in Latin, with him as: "Ipse somnus remissa pictus est facie, candidamque super nigra vestem habet, eo, ut puto, quod nox sit ipsius, et quæ diem excipiunt"[87] What does this mean. "et quæ diem excipiunt"? Did Olearius not know that μεθ' ἡμέραν means "interdiu," and νύκτωρ "noctu"? It might be said in his defence that one grows weary of purging the old miserable translations. He should then at least not have desired to excuse or refute any one out of an untested translation. But as it further runs, "Cornu is (Somnus) manibus quoque tenet, ut qui insomnia per veram portam inducere soleat," he appends in a note "Ex hoc vero Philostrati loco patet optimo jure portas illas somni dici posse, qui scilicet somnia per eas inducat, nec necesse esse ut apud Virgilium (Æneid vi. v. 562) somni dictum intelligamus pro somnii, ut voluit Turnebus" (lib iv. Advers. c. 14). But Philostratus himself does not speak of the portals of Sleep, Somni, but of Dreams, Somnii, and it is also Ὄνειρος, not Ὕπνος with him who admits dreams through the true gates. Consequently Virgil can still only be helped otherwise than by Turnebus's commentary, if he absolutely must coincide with Homer in his conception of these gates Giraldus is entirely silent concerning the form of Death.

Natalis Comes gives to Death a black garment strewn with stars.[88] The black garment, as we saw above, is founded on Euripides, but who put the stars upon it I do not know. He has also dreams *contortis cruribus* and

[86] Hist. Deorum Syntag. ix. p 311, edit. Jo Jensii
[87] Iconum, lib. i. 27. [88] Mythol. lib. iii. cap 13.

assures us that Lucian made them roam about thus on his island of Sleep. But with Lucian they are mere shapeless dreams, ἄμορφοι, and the crooked legs are Natalis's own invention. Even according to him these crooked legs would not appertain to dreams in general as an allegorical distinction, but only to certain dreams.

To refer to other mythological compilers would scarcely repay the trouble. Banier alone may seem to merit an exception. But even Banier says nothing of the form of Death, and commits more than one inaccuracy respecting the form of Sleep[89] For he too mistakes Dream for Sleep in this picture of Philostratus, and sees him there formed as a man, though he thinks that he can determine from the passage of Pausanias that he was represented as a child, and only as a child. He also copies a gross error from Montfaucon, which has been already condemned by Winckelmann and which should therefore have been familiar to his German translator[90] Namely, both Montfaucon and Banier proclaim the Sleep of Algardi in the Villa Borghese as antique, and a new vase, that stands near it with various others, is declared to be a vessel filled with a somniferous potion, just because Montfaucon found it placed beside it on an engraving. This Sleep of Algardi itself, however exquisite the workmanship may be, is quite at variance with the simplicity and the dignity of the ancients. Its position and gesture are borrowed from the position and gesture of the sleeping Faun in the Palazzo Barberini, to which I have referred above.

Nowhere have I met with an author on this branch of knowledge, who has not either left the image of Death, as it existed amongst the ancients, totally undecided or has it incorrectly. Even those who were familiar with the monuments which I have named, or with others like them, have not therefore approached much nearer the truth.

Thus Tollius knew that various old marbles were extant, on which boys with reversed torches represented the eternal sleep of the dead.[91] But is this to recognise in one

[89] Erlauterung der Gotterlehre, vol iv. p. 147, German trans

[90] Preface to Geschichte der Kunst, p. 15. [91] In notis ad Roudelli Expositionem, S. T. p. 292.

of them Death himself? Did he therefore comprehend that the deity of Death was never represented in another form by the ancients? It is a long step from the symbolical signs of an idea, to the well-defined establishment of this idea personified, and reverenced as an independent being.

Just the same may be said of Gori. Gori most expressly names two such winged boys on old sarcophagi "Genios Somnum et Mortem referentes,"[92] but this very "referentes" betrays him. And since at another place[93] he speaks of these as "Genii Mortem et Funus designantes"; since elsewhere, notwithstanding the meaning of Death which he grants to Buonarotti, he still sees in one a *Cupido*, since, as we have seen, he recognises the skeletons on old stones as *Mortes*; it is almost pretty well unquestionable that he was at least very undecided in himself concerning these matters.

The same holds good for Count Maffei. For although he held that the two winged boys with reversed torches seen on old monuments were meant for Sleep and Death, yet he declared such a boy, who stands on the well-known "Conclamation marble" in the Saloon of Antiquities at Paris, to be neither the one nor the other, but a genius, who shows by his reversed torch that the deceased person indicated died in the flower of youth, and that Amor and his kingdom mourn this death[94] Even when Dom Martin bitterly controverted this first error, and incorporated the same marble in his Museum Veronese, he makes no attempt at its clearer identification, and leaves the figures on the 139th plate, which he could have used for this purpose, without any explanation.

But this Dom Martin scarcely deserved to be confuted. He would have the two genii with reversed torches found on ancient monuments and urns, to be held as the genii of the man and of his wife or for the united guardian spirits whom, according to some of the ancients, every one possessed.

He might and should have known, that at least one of

[92] Inscript ant quæ in Etruriæ urbibus exstant, parte iii p xciii

[93] *Ibid* p lxxxi

[94] Explic de divers Monuments singuliers qui ont rapport à la Religion des plus anciens peuples, par le R P. Dom **, p 36.

these figures, in consequence of the express ancient superscription, must needs be Sleep, and just now I luckily hit upon a passage in Winckelmann in which he has already censured the ignorance of this Frenchman.

Winckelmann writes: "It occurs to me that another Frenchman, Martin, a man who could dare to say Grotius had not understood the Septuagint, announces with boldness and decision that the two genii on the ancient urns cannot be Sleep and Death, and yet the altar on which they figure in this sense with the antique superscription of Sleep and Death, is publicly exhibited in the courtyard of the Palazzo Albani." I ought to have recalled this passage above (p 182), for Winckelmann here means the same marble which I have there adduced from his Essay on Allegory. What was not so clearly expressed there, is the clearer here; not only the one genius, but also the other, are by the ancient inscription literally designated, on this Albani monument, as what they are, namely Sleep and Death. How much I wish that I could set a final seal upon this investigation by this announcement!

Yet a word about Spence ere I close. Spence, who most positively desires to force upon us a skeleton as the antique image of Death. Spence opines, that the ordinary representations of Death among the ancients, could not well have been other than terrible and ghastly, because the ancients generally entertained far darker and sadder conceptions of his nature than we could now admit.[95]

Yet it is certain that that religion which first discovered to man that even natural death was the fruit and the wages of sin, must have infinitely increased the terrors of death. There have been sages who have held life to be a punishment, but to deem death a punishment, could not of itself have occurred to the brain of a man who only used his reason, without revelation.

From this point of view it would presumably be our religion which has banished the ancient cheerful image of Death out of the domains of art. Since however this religion did not wish to reveal this terrible truth to drive us to despair; since it too assures us that the death of the

[95] Polymetis, p. 262

righteous cannot be other than gentle and restoring; I do not see what should prevent our artists from banishing the terrible skeletons, and again taking possession of that other better image. Even Scripture speaks of an angel of Death, and what artist would not rather mould an angel than a skeleton?

Only misunderstood religion can estrange us from beauty, and it is a token that religion is true, and rightly understood, if it everywhere leads us back to the beautiful.

DRAMATIC NOTES.

(*HAMBURG DRAMATURGY*)

The first number of these Dramatic Notes was issued May 1767, immediately after the opening of the Hamburg Theatre, for which Lessing was engaged in the capacity of critic The publication was a weekly one, but it accompanies the theatre no further than the first fifty-two performances; the last portion, published as a book, was not issued until Easter 1769. The work is here translated, with occasional abridgment, for the first time.

PREFACE.

It will be easily guessed that the new management of the local theatre is the occasion of the present publication Its object is to respond to the good intentions that must be attributed to the gentlemen who propose to undertake the management They have themselves amply explained their intentions, and the better portion of the public, both within and without our city, have given to their utterances the approval which every voluntary exertion for the general good may expect to meet with in our day.

It is true that people are always and everywhere to be found who, judging others by themselves, see nothing but hidden designs in every good undertaking This form of self-consolation might gladly be permitted to them. Only when the assumed hidden designs provoke them against the object itself, when their malicious envy is busy undermining this object in order to frustrate these assumed designs, then they must be informed that they are the most contemptible members of human society.

Happy the spot where these wretches do not give the tone to society, where the greater mass of well-disposed citizens keep them in the bounds of respect, and do not suffer that the better portion of a whole community become the prey of their cabals, that patriotic objects become a reproach to their petty sneering wit!

May Hamburg be so happy in all that concerns its wealth and its freedom: for it deserves to be thus happy!

When Schlegel made suggestions for the improvement of the Danish theatre (a German poet for the Danish theatre!)—suggestions that may long form a subject of reproach to Germany, which gave him no opportunity of making them for the improvement of her own—this was his first and foremost saying. "The care of working for their own gain and loss must not be left to the actors themselves." But the best actors have degraded a free art to the level of a trade which permits its master to carry on the business as negligently and selfishly as he likes if only necessity or luxury bring him customers.

If therefore nothing further has been attained here than that an association of friends of the stage have laid their hands to the work and have combined to work according to a common plan for the public good, even then, and just through this, much would have been gained. For out of this first change, even with only meagre encouragement from the public, all other improvements needed by our theatre could quickly and easily spring.

In matters of expense and industry assuredly nothing will be economised, whether taste and judgment will be wanting only time can teach. And is it not in the hands of the public to improve and redress whatever it may here find defective? Only let it come, and see and hear, and examine and judge! Its voice shall never be contemptuously ignored, its judgment shall always be respectfully heard

Only every little criticaster must not deem himself the public, and he whose expectations have been disappointed must make clear to himself in some degree of what nature his expectations have been. For not every amateur is a connoisseur. Not every one who can feel the beauties of one drama, the correct play of one actor, can on that account estimate the value of all others. He has no taste who has only a one-sided taste; but he is often the more partisan True taste is general, it spreads over beauties of every kind, and does not expect more enjoyment or delight from each than its nature can afford.

The steps are many that a growing stage must traverse before it attains the climax of perfection; but a corrupt stage is naturally still further removed from this height, and I greatly fear that the German stage is more the latter than the former.

Everything consequently cannot be done at once. But what we do not see growing we find after some time has grown. The slowest person, who does not lose sight of his goal, will always outstrip him who wanders aimlessly.

This "Dramaturgie" is to form a critical index of all the plays performed, and is to accompany every step made here either by the art of the poet or the actor. The choice of the plays is no trifle, for choice presupposes quantity, and if masterpieces should not always be performed it is easy to perceive where the fault lies. At the same time it is well that the mediocre should not pretend to be more than it is, so that the dissatisfied spectator may at least learn to judge from it. It is only needful to explain to a person of healthy mind the reasons why something has not pleased him if one desires to teach him good taste. Some mediocre plays must also be retained on account of their containing certain excellent parts in which this or that actor can display his whole strength. A musical composition is not immediately rejected because its libretto is miserable.

The great discrimination of a dramatic critic is shown if he knows how to distinguish infallibly, in every case of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, what and how much of this is to be placed to the account of the poet or the actor. To blame the actor for what is the fault of the poet is to injure both. The actor loses heart, and the poet is made self-confident.

Above all, it is the actor who may in this particular demand the greatest severity and impartiality. The justification of the poet may be attempted at any time; his work remains, and can be always brought again before our eyes But the art of the actor is transitory in its expression. His good and bad pass by rapidly, and not seldom the passing mood of the spectator is more account-

able than the actor for the more or less vivid impression produced upon him.

A beautiful figure, a fascinating mien, a speaking eye, a charming gait, a sweet intonation, a melodious voice, are things that cannot be expressed in words Still they are neither the only nor the greatest perfections of the actor. Valuable gifts of nature are very necessary to his calling, but they by no means suffice for it. He must everywhere think with the poet; he must even think for him in places where the poet has shown himself human

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DRAMATIC NOTES.

No. 1.—May 1, 1767.

The theatre was successfully opened on the 22nd of last month with the tragedy 'Olindo and Sophronia.' 'Olindo and Sophronia' is the work of a young poet, and is a posthumous incomplete work. Its theme is the well-known episode in Tasso It is not easy to convert a touching little story into a touching drama. True, it costs little trouble to invent new complications and to enlarge separate emotions into scenes. But to prevent these new complications from weakening the interest or interfering with probability; to transfer oneself from the point of view of a narrator into the real standpoint of each personage; to let passions arise before the eyes of the spectator in lieu of describing them, and to let them grow up without effort in such illusory continuity that he must sympathise, whether he will or no; this it is which is needful, and which genius does without knowing it, without tediously explaining it to itself, and which mere cleverness endeavours in vain to imitate.

In his 'Olindo and Sophronia' Tasso appears to have had Virgil's 'Nisus and Euryalus' before his eyes As Virgil in the latter has depicted the strength of friendship. so Tasso in the former wished to depict the strength of love. There it was the heroic zeal of duty that gave rise to the test of friendship. here it is religion that gives to love the opportunity of evincing itself in all its power. But religion, which Tasso only uses as a means by which love

is shown efficient, has become the main end in Cronegk's treatment. He wished to glorify the triumph of the one in the triumph of the other. Beyond doubt a pious amendment—only nothing more than pious! For it has misled him into making that which is simple and natural, true and human, in Tasso into all that is confused and fabulous, wonderful and transcendental!

In Tasso it is a wizard, a fellow who is neither a Christian nor a Mahommedan, but one who has spun together his own particular superstition out of both religions, who gives Aladin the advice to bring the miraculous image of the Virgin out of the temple into the mosque. Why did Cronegk convert this wizard into a Mahommedan priest? If this priest was not as ignorant of his religion as the poet seems to be, he could not possibly have given this advice. It tolerated no images in its mosques. Cronegk betrays in several things what an erroneous idea he entertains of the Mahommedan faith. In Tasso the image of Mary disappears from the mosque without our knowing precisely whether human hands have removed it or whether a higher power has been in play. Cronegk makes Olindo the perpetrator True he converts the image of Mary into "an image of our Lord on the Cross," but an image is an image, and this wretched superstition makes Olindo very contemptible. It is impossible to be reconciled to him after he could venture for so paltry a deed to bring his nation to the verge of destruction. If he does afterwards openly confess his deed it is nothing but his duty and no magnanimity. In Tasso it is only love that impels him to this step; he will save Sophronia or perish with her, die, only to die with her. If one couch cannot unite them, let it be one scaffold; at her side, bound to the same stake, destined to be consumed by the same fire, he is only sensible of the happiness of such sweet vicinity, he thinks of nothing he has to hope for beyond the grave or wishes for nothing but that this union may be yet closer and more intimate, that he may press heart to heart and that he may give forth his soul upon her lips.

This admirable contrast between a lovable, calm, entirely transcendental dreamer and a hot passionate youth

is utterly lost in Cronegk's version. They are both of the chilliest uniformity, both have their heads full only of martyrdom, and not enough that he and she wish to die for religion, Evander wishes to do the same and even Serene is not ill inclined.

Here I wish to make a double remark which, borne in mind, will save young tragic poets from committing some great faults. If heroic sentiments are to arouse admiration, the poet must not be too lavish of them, for what we see often, what we see in many persons, no longer excites astonishment. Every Christian in 'Olindo and Sophronia' holds being martyred and dying as easy as drinking a glass of water. We hear these pious bravadoes so often and out of so many mouths, that they lose all their force.

The second remark concerns Christian tragedies in particular. Their heroes are generally martyrs. Now we live in an age when the voice of healthy reason resounds too loudly to allow every fanatic who rushes into death wantonly, without need, without regard for all his citizen duties, to assume to himself the title of a martyr. We know too well to-day how to distinguish the false martyr from the true, but despise the former as much as we reverence the latter, and at most they extort from us a melancholy tear for the blindness and folly of which we see humanity is capable. But this tear is none of those pleasing ones that tragedy should evoke. If therefore the poet chooses a martyr for his hero let him be careful to give to his actions the purest and most incontrovertible motives, let him place him in an unalterable necessity of taking the step that exposes him to danger, let him not suffer him to seek death carelessly or insolently challenge it. Else his pious hero becomes an object of our distaste, and even the religion that he seeks to honour may suffer thereby. I have already said that it could only be a superstition that led Olindo to steal the image from the mosque as contemptible as that which we despise in the wizard Ismenor. It does not excuse the poet that there were ages when such superstition was general and could subsist side by side with many excellent qualities, that there still are countries where it would be nothing strange for pious igno-

iance. For he wrote his tragedy as little for those ages as he intended that it should be performed in Bohemia or Spain The good author, be he of whatever species he will, if he does not write merely to show his wit and learning, has ever the best and most intelligent of his time and country before his eyes and he only condescends to write what pleases and can touch these. Even the dramatic author, if he lowers himself to the mob, lowers himself only in order that he may enlighten and improve the mass and not to confirm them in their prejudices or in their ignoble mode of thought.

No. 2.

Yet another remark, also bearing on Christian tragedies might be made about the conversion of Clorinda. Convinced though we may be of the immediate operations of grace, yet they can please us little on the stage, where everything that has to do with the character of the personages must arise from natural causes We can only tolerate miracles in the physical world; in the moral everything must retain its natural course, because the theatre is to be the school of the moral world. The motives for every resolve, for every change of opinion or even thoughts, must be carefully balanced against each other so as to be in accordance with the hypothetical character, and must never produce more than they could produce in accordance with strict probability. The poet, by beauty of details, may possess the art of deluding us to overlook misproportions of this kind, but he only deceives us once, and as soon as we are cool again we take back the applause he has lured from us Applying these remarks to the fourth scene of the third act, it will be seen that Sophronia's speeches and acts could have roused pity in Clorinda, but were much too impotent to work conversion on a person who had no natural disposition to enthusiasm. Tasso also makes Clorinda embrace Christianity, but only in her last hour, only after she has recently heard that her parents were also inclined to this faith, subtle weighty reasons by whose means the operations of a higher power are, as it were, entwined with the course of natural events.

No one has better understood how far this point may be carried on the stage than Voltaire. After the sensitive noble soul of Zamor has been shaken to its depths by example and entreaties, by generosity and exhortation, he allows him to divine rather than believe in the truths of a religion whose adherents evince such greatness And perchance Voltaire would have suppressed even this surmise if it had not been needful to do something for the pacification of the spectator.

Even Corneille's 'Polyeucte' is to be condemned in view of the above remarks, and since the plays made in imitation of it are yet more faulty, the first tragedy that deserves the name of Christian has beyond doubt still to appear. I mean a play in which the Christian interests us solely as a Christian. But is such a piece even possible? Is not the character of a true Christian something quite untheatrical? Does not the gentle pensiveness, the unchangeable meekness that are his essential features, war with the whole business of tragedy that strives to purify passions by passions? Does not his expectation of rewarding happiness after this life contradict the disinterestedness with which we wish to see all great and good actions undertaken and carried out on the stage?

Until a work of genius arises that incontestably decides these objections,—for we know by experience what difficulties genius can surmount,—my advice is this. to leave all existent Christian tragedies unperformed. This advice. deduced from the necessities of art, and which deprives us of nothing more than very mediocre plays, is not the worse because it comes to the aid of weak spirits who feel I know not what shrinking, when they hear sentiments spoken from the stage that they had only expected to hear in a holier place. The theatre should give offence to no one, be he who he may, and I wish it would and could obviate all preconceived offence.

Cronegk only brought his play to the end of the fourth act. The rest has been added by a pen in Vienna: a pen—for the work of a head is not very visible. The "continuator" has, to all appearance, ended the story quite otherwise than Cronegk intended to end it. Death best dissolves all perplexities, therefore he despatches both

Olindo and Sophronia. Tasso lets them both escape, for Clorinda interests herself for them with noble generosity. But Cronegk had made Clorinda enamoured, and that being the case, it was certainly difficult to guess how he could have decided between two rivals, without calling death to his aid. In another still worse tragedy where one of the principal characters died quite casually, a spectator asked his neighbour, "But what did she die of?"—"Of what? Of the fifth act," was the reply. In very truth the fifth act is an ugly evil disease that carries off many a one to whom the first four acts promised a longer life.

But I will not proceed more deeply with the criticism of the play. Mediocre as it is, it was excellently performed. I keep silence concerning the external splendour, for this improvement of our stage requires nothing but money. The art whose help is needful to this end is as perfect in our country as in any other, only artists wish to be paid as well as in any other.

We must rest satisfied with the performance of a play if among four or five persons some have played excellently and the others well. Whoever is so offended by a beginner or a makeshift in the subordinate parts, that he turns up his nose at the whole, let him travel to Utopia and there visit the perfect theatre where even the candle-snuffer is a Garrick.

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Interspersed moral maxims are Cronegk's strong point . . . Unfortunately he often tries to persuade us that coloured bits of glass are gems, and witty antitheses common sense. Two such lines in the first act, had a peculiar effect upon me.

The one

"Heaven can pardon, but a priest never"

The other

"Who thinks ill of others is himself a scoundrel."

I was taken aback to see a general movement in the parterre and to hear that murmur with which approval is expressed when close attention does not permit it to break out. I thought on the one hand. Most excellent! they love

morality here, this parterre finds pleasure in maxims, on this stage Euripides could have earned fame, and Socrates would gladly have visited it. But on the other I noticed as well how false, how perverted, how offensive were these presumed maxims, and I greatly wished that disapproval had had its share in this murmur. For there has only been one Athens and there will ever remain but one Athens, where even the mob has moral feelings so fine and delicate that actors and authors run the risk of being driven from the stage on account of impure morality. I know full well that the sentiments in a drama must be in accordance with the assumed character of the person who utters them. They can therefore not bear the stamp of absolute truth, it is enough if they are poetically true, if we must admit that this character under these circumstances, with these passions could not have judged otherwise. But on the other hand this poetical truth must also approach to the absolute and the poet must never think so unphilosophically as to assume that a man could desire evil for evil's sake, that a man could act on vicious principles, knowing them to be vicious and boast of them to himself and to others. Such a man is a monster as fearful as he is uninstructive and nothing save the paltry resource of a shallow-head that can deem glittering tirades the highest beauties of a tragedy. If Ismenoi is a cruel priest, does it follow that all priests are Ismenois? It is useless to reply that the allusion refers to priests of a false religion. No religion in the world was ever so false that its teachers must necessarily be monsters Priests have worked mischief in false religion as well as in true, but not because they were priests but because they were villains who would have abused the privileges of any other class in the service of their evil propensities.

If the stage enunciates such thoughtless judgments on priests, what wonder if among these are found some foolish enough to decry it as the straight road to hell?

But I am falling back into the criticism of the play and I wanted to speak of the actors.

No 3.

Why is it that we like to hear the commonest maxim spoken by this actor (Herr Eckhof)? What is it that another must learn from him if we are to find him equally entertaining in the same case? All maxims must come from the abundance of the heart with which the mouth overflows. We must appear to have thought of them as little as we intend to boast of them. It therefore follows as a matter of course that all the moral parts must be very well learnt by heart. They must be spoken without hesitation, without the faintest stammer, in an unbroken easy flow of words, so that they may not appear a troublesome unburdening of memory but spontaneous promptings of the actual condition. It must also follow that no false accentuation lead us to suspect that the actor is chattering what he does not understand. He must convince us by a firm assured tone of voice that he is penetrated by the full meaning of his words.

But true accentuation can, if needful, be imparted to a parrot. Yet how far is the actor, who only understands a passage, removed from him who also feels it! Words whose sense we have once grasped, that are once impressed upon our memories, can be very correctly repeated even when the soul is occupied with quite other matters, but then no feeling is possible. The soul must be quite present, must bestow its attention solely and only on its words, and then only——

And yet even then the actor may really feel very much and still appear to have no feeling. Feeling is altogether the most controverted among the talents of an actor It may be present where we do not recognise it, and we can fancy we recognise it where it does not exist. For feeling is something internal of which we can only judge by its external signs Now it is possible that certain outer things in the build of a body do not permit of these tokens or else weaken them and make them dubious An actor may have a certain cast of features, certain gestures, a certain intonation, with which we are accustomed to associate quite different sentiments from those which he is to represent and express at that moment. If this is the

case, he may feel ever so much, we do not believe him for he is at variance with himself. On the other hand another may be so happily formed, may possess such decisive features, all his muscles may be so easily and quickly at his command, he may have power over such delicate and varied inflexions of voice; in short he may be blessed in such a high degree with all the gifts requisite for dramatic gesture, that he may appear animated with the most intense feeling when he is playing parts that he does not represent originally but after some good model, and where everything that he says and does is nothing but mechanical imitation.

Beyond question, this man for all his indifference and coldness is more useful to the theatre than the other. When he has for a long spell done nothing but copy others, he will at last have accumulated a number of little rules according to which he begins to act and through the observance of which (in consequence of the law that the modifications of the soul that induce certain changes of the body, in return are induced by these bodily changes) he arrives at a species of feeling that has not, it is true, the duration or the fire of that which arises in the soul, but is yet powerful enough in the moments of representation to bring about some of the involuntary changes of body whose existence forms almost the only certain clue we have as to the presence of inner feeling. Such an actor is to represent for instance, the extremest fury of anger. I will suppose that he does not even properly understand his part, that he neither comprehends fully the reasons for this anger nor can imagine them vividly enough in order to arouse anger in his soul And yet I say that if he has only learnt the very commonest expressions of anger from an actor of original feeling and knows how to copy him faithfully—the hasty stride, the stamp of the foot, the voice now harsh, now smothered, the play of the eyebrows, the trembling lip, the gnashing teeth, &c—I say that if he only imitates well these things that can be imitated, his acting will thus infallibly cast on his mind a dim feeling of anger that will react on his body and will there produce such changes as do not depend solely upon his will. His face will glow, his eyes will sparkle, his

muscles will dilate; in short he will seem to be truly furious without being so, without comprehending in the least why he should be so

From these principles of feeling in general I have endeavoured to ascertain what external tokens accompany those feelings with which moral axioms should be spoken, and which of these tokens are within our command, so that every actor, whether he have the feeling himself or not, may represent them I think they are the following.

Every moral maxim is a general axiom, which as such demands a degree of calm reflexion and mental composure. It must therefore be spoken with tranquillity and a certain coldness.

But again, this general axiom is also the result of impressions made by individual circumstances on the acting personages. It is no mere symbolical conclusion, it is a generalised sensation and as such it requires to be uttered with a certain fire and enthusiasm.

Consequently with enthusiasm and composure; with coldness and fire?

Not otherwise; with a compound of both, in which however, according to the conditions of the situation, now one and now the other, predominates.

If the situation is a placid one, the soul must desire to gain a sort of elevation by the moral maxim, it must seem to make general observations on its happiness or its duties, in such a manner that by help of this very generalising it may enjoy the former the more keenly and observe the latter the more willingly and bravely

If on the other hand the situation is turbulent, the soul must appear to recall itself by means of the moral axiom (under which definition I comprehend every general observation); it must seem to give to its passions the appearance of reason and to stormy outbursts the look of premeditated resolves

The former requires an elevated and inspired tone, the latter a tempered and solemn one For in the one reason must fire emotion, while in the other emotion must be cooled by reason

Most actors exactly reverse this. In their agitated scenes they bluster out the general observations as excit-

edly as the other speeches, and in the quiet scenes repeat them just as calmly as the rest. It therefore follows that moral maxims are not distinguished either in the one or the other, and this is the cause why we find them either unnatural or stupid and chilly. These actors have never reflected that embroidery must contrast with its ground, and that to embroider gold on gold is wretched taste.

Finally they spoil everything by their gestures They neither know whether they should make any nor of what kind. They usually make too many and too insignificant ones. When in an agitated scene the soul suddenly seems to collect itself to cast a reflective glance upon itself or that which surrounds it, it is natural that it should command all the movements of the body that depend upon its will. Not only the voice grows more composed, the limbs also fall into a condition of rest, to express the inner rest without which the eye of reason cannot well look about it The unquiet foot treads more firmly, the arms sink, the whole body draws itself up into a horizontal position; a pause—and then the reflexion The man stands there in solemn silence as if he would not disturb himself from hearing himself The reflexion is ended—again a pause—and then, according to whether the reflexion was intended to subdue his passions or to inflame them, he suddenly bursts forth again or gradually resumes the play of his limbs Only the face during the reflexion still retains the traces of agitation; mien and eye are still on fire and moved, for mien and eye are not so quickly within our control as foot and hand In this therefore, in these expressive looks, in this fiery eye, and in the composure of the rest of the body, consists the mixture of fire and calm with which I believe that moral reflexions should be spoken in passionate situations

And with this same mixture they should be spoken in quiet situations, only with the difference that the part of the action which is fiery in the former, is here calm; and that which is calm here must be fiery there. For instance, when the soul has nothing but gentle sensations, and endeavours to give to these gentle sensations a higher degree of vivacity, the limbs that are under control will be brought into play, the hands will be in full movement,

only the expression of the face cannot follow so quickly and in mien and eye the quiet will yet reign out of which the rest of the body is trying to work itself.

No. 4.

But of what kind are the movements of the hand, with which in quiet situations, maxims should be spoken?

We know very little concerning the Chironomia of the ancients, that is to say, the nature of the rules prescribed by the ancients in the use of the hands. We know this, that they carried gestures to a perfection of which we can scarcely form an idea from what our orators can compass in this respect. Of this whole language we seem to have retained nothing but an inarticulate cry, nothing but the power to make movements without knowing how to give these movements an accurately determined meaning and how to connect them together so that they may be capable of conveying not only one idea, but one connected meaning.

I am quite aware that among the ancients the pantomimist must not be confounded with the actor. The hands of the actor were by no means as talkative as those of the pantomimist In the one case they supplied the place of speech, while in the other they were only to lend emphasis, and as natural signs of things to lend life and truth to the preconceited signs of the voice. In pantomimes the movements of the hands were not merely natural signs, many of them had a conventional meaning and from these the actor had to refrain completely. He therefore used his hands less than the pantomimist, but as little in vain as he. He did not move his hand if he could not mean something thereby or emphasise something. He knew nothing of those indifferent movements through whose constant monotonous use a large portion of actors, especially women, give to themselves the appearance of mere marionettes Now the right hand, now the left, now a swing from the body, now agitating the air with both hands is what they call action, and whoever can practise it with a certain ballet-master's grace deems that he can fascinate us.

I know well that even Hogarth advises actors to learn how to move their hands in beautiful undulatory lines, but in all directions with all the possible variations of which these lines are capable in consideration of their sweep, size and duration. And finally he only advises it as an exercise to make them supple in movement, to make the movements of grace familiar to the arms, but not in the belief that acting itself consists in nothing more than in always describing such beautiful lines in the same direction.

Away therefore with these insignificant *portebras;* especially away with them in reflective scenes. Grace in the wrong place is affectation and grimace, and the very same grace too often repeated, becomes at last cold and then repulsive. I seem to see a schoolboy say his task when the actor tenders to me moral reflexions with the same movements with which a hand is given in the minuet, or as if he spun them down from a spindle.

Every movement made by the hand in such passages should be significant. It is possible often to be picturesque if only the pantomimic be avoided. Perhaps another time I may find an occasion to explain by examples these various gradations from significant to picturesque and from picturesque to pantomimic gestures. Just now it would lead me too far and I will only remark that among significant gestures there is one kind that the actor must note above all and with which alone he can impart to the moral life and light. These are in one word the individual gestures. The moral is a general axiom extracted from the particular circumstances of the acting personages; by means of its generality it becomes foreign to the action, it becomes a digression whose connexion with the actual present is not comprehended or noticed by the less observant or less acute spectators. If consequently a means exists to make this connexion evident, to bring back the symbolical of the moral to the visible, and if this means lies in certain gestures, the actor must on no account omit making them.

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No. 5.

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If Shakespeare was not as great an actor as he was a dramatist, at least he knew as well what was needed for the art of the one as the other. Yes, perhaps he even pondered more about the former because he had the less genius for it. Certainly every word that he puts into Hamlet's mouth when addressing the players should be a golden rule for all actors who care for sensible approbation. "I pray you," he says among other things, "speak the speech as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier had spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus: but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness."

The fire of the actor is often mentioned, discussions are common as to whether the actor can show too much animation. If those who maintain this cite as an instance that an actor may be passionate or at least more passionate than circumstances require, then those who deny it have a right to say that in such cases the actor has not shown too much animation, but too little intelligence. Altogether it depends greatly what we understand under the word fire. If screams and contortions are fire then it is incontestable that the actor can carry these too far. But if fire consists in the rapidity and vivacity with which all those parts that make the actor, bring their properties to bear, to give to his acting the semblance of truth, then we should not desire to see this semblance of truth carried to the extremest illusion, if we deemed it possible that the actor could apply too much fire in this sense. It can therefore not be this fire the moderation of which Shakespeare requires even in the torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of passion. He can only mean that violence of voice and movement; and it is easy to discover why, where the poet has not observed the least moderation, the actor must yet moderate himself in both points. There are few voices that do not become displeasing at

their utmost pitch, and movements that are too rapid, too agitated will rarely be dignified. Now our eyes and our ears are not to be offended, and only when everything is avoided in the expression of violent passion that can be unpleasant to these, can acting possess that smoothness and polish which Hamlet demands from it even under these circumstances, if it is to make the deepest impression and to rouse the conscience of stiffnecked sinners out of its sleep.

The art of the actor here stands midway between the plastic arts and poetry. As visible painting beauty must be its highest law, but as transitory painting it need not always give to its postures the calm dignity that makes ancient sculpture so imposing. It may, it must at times permit to itself the wildness of a Tempesta, the insolence of a Bernini; and they have in this art all that which is expressive and peculiar without the offensive element that arises in the plastic arts through their permanent posture. Only it must not remain in them too long, it must prepare for them gradually by previous movements, and must resolve them again into the general tone of the conventional. Neither must it ever give to them all the strength which the poet may use in his treatment. For though the art is silent poetry, yet it desires to make itself comprehended immediately to our eyes, and every sense must be gratified if it is to convey unfalsified the proper impressions to the soul.

It might easily come about that the moderation demanded by art, even in the extremes of passion, does not consort well with applause. But what applause? It is true the gallery greatly loves the noisy and boisterous, and it will rarely omit to repay a good lung with loud hand-clappings. The German parterre also shares this taste in part; and there are actors cunning enough to derive advantage from this taste. The most sleepy actor will rouse himself towards the end of the scene, when he is to make his exit, raise his voice and overload the action, without reflecting whether the sense of his speech requires this extra exertion. Not seldom it even contradicts the mood in which he should depart; but what matters that to him? Enough that he has thus reminded the parterre to

look at him, and, if it will be so good as to applaud after him. They should hiss after him! But, alas! the spectators are partly not connoisseurs, and in part too good-natured, and they take the desire to please them for the deed. . . . . .

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[No. 6 consists of a Prologue and Epilogue spoken on the first night. They were not written by Lessing.]

No. 7.

The Prologue shows us the drama in its highest dignity, inasmuch as it regards it as supplementary to the laws There are matters in the moral conduct of men which, in regard to their immediate influence upon the well-being of society, are too insignificant and in themselves too changeable to be worth while placing under the protection of the law There are others again, against which the whole force of legislation falls powerless. They are too incomprehensible in their mainsprings, too abnormal in themselves, and too unfathomable in their consequences, so that they either escape totally from the penalty of the law, or cannot possibly be punished according to their due. I do not attempt to restrict comedy to the former as a species of the ludicrous; or tragedy to the latter, as extraordinary manifestations in the domain of morals that astonish our reason and rouse tumult in our breast Genius laughs away all the boundary lines of criticism. Only so much is indisputable, that drama chooses its themes this side or beyond the frontiers of law, and only touches its objects in so far as they either lose themselves in the absurd, or extend to the horrible

The Epilogue dwells upon one of the chief lessons that a great part of the fable and character of the tragedy was to teach. True it was rather rash of Herr von Cronegk to preach toleration in a play whose subject was taken from the unhappy time of the Crusades, and to endeavour to show the enormity of a spirit of persecution as practised by the adherents of Mahommedanism For these Crusades themselves, at the outset a political subterfuge of the popes, proved one of the most inhuman of persecutions of which

rarely as well represented as it is written. Mediocrity always fares better with the actors. Perhaps because they can put more of themselves into the mediocre; perhaps because the mediocre leaves us more time and repose to observe their acting; perhaps because in the mediocre everything turns upon one or two prominent characters, whereas in a more perfect play every person demands a first-rate actor, and if they are not this, in spoiling their part they also help to spoil the whole.

In 'Essex' all these and various other causes combine. Neither the earl nor the queen is delineated by the poet with such force that their parts cannot be strengthened by the actors. Essex does not speak so proudly but that the actor can show greater pride in every posture, every look, every situation. Indeed it is essential to pride that it express itself more by outward bearing than by words. Essex's words are often modest, and he lets us see rather than hear, that it is a proud modesty. This *rôle* must therefore necessarily gain in representation. Neither can the subordinate parts have an evil influence upon him; the more subduedly Cecil and Salisbury are performed, the more prominent will Essex be. I need therefore not relate in detail, how excellently Eckhof performed that which even the most indifferent actor cannot wholly spoil.

This is not quite the case with Elizabeth's part, yet even she can scarcely fail utterly. Elizabeth is as affectionate as she is proud, and I willingly believe that a female heart can be both at once, but how an actress can represent both well, that I do not properly comprehend. In nature we do not ascribe much tenderness to a proud woman, nor much pride to a tender one. We do not ascribe it, I say; for the distinctive signs of the one contradict the signs of the other. It is a miracle if both are equally exhibited; and if one of these is especially in her power, then the passion that expresses itself through the other can be felt, but scarcely we believe, felt as powerfully as she says. Now how can an actress go beyond nature? If her figure is majestic, if her voice is full and masculine, if her mien is bold, if her movements are rapid and decided, then the

proud parts will be rendered admirably by her; but how about the tender ones? If, on the other hand, her figure is less imposing, if her looks speak gentleness, her eyes a modest fire, her voice more melody than majesty, her movements more grace and dignity than power and intellect, then the tender parts will be rendered admirably by her, but how about the proud ones? She will not mar them, certainly not, she will exhibit them sufficiently, we shall see an offended angry lover in her, only no Elizabeth who was masculine enough to send home her general and lover with a box on the ear. I think therefore, that the actresses who could exhibit to us this twofold Elizabeth with equal skill, are even rarer than the Elizabeths themselves, and we can and must be satisfied if one half of the character is played well and the other half is not totally overlooked.

Madame Loewen pleased greatly in the part of Elizabeth, and applying my general remark to her, she let us see and hear more of the tender woman than the proud monarch. Her figure, her voice, her modest action led us to expect nothing else, and I think that our enjoyment lost nothing thereby. For if one part of this character must of necessity obscure the other, if it cannot be but that either the queen or the loving woman must suffer, I think it is preferable that something of the pride of the queen be lost, rather than the tenderness of the loving woman

It is not only my individual opinion when I judge thus; still less is it my intention thereby to compliment a lady who would still be a great artist, whether or no she had succeeded in this part. I only know one way in which to flatter an artist of my own or of the other sex; and this consists in assuming that they are far removed from all vanity, that art is above all else in their estimation, that they like to be judged openly and freely, and would now and then be criticized falsely rather than seldom. Whoever does not understand such flattery, in him I must confess myself mistaken and he does not deserve that we should study him The true artist will not even believe that we see and comprehend his perfections, however much noise we may make about them, until he

perceives that we also have an eye and an ear for his shortcomings. He will smile to himself at our unreserved admiration, and only the praise of him who also has courage to blame him, will touch him nearly.

I was about to say that reasons might be assigned why the actress should emphasize the tender rather than the proud Elizabeth. She must be proud, that is conceded and that she is proud, we hear. The question is only, whether she should appear more tender than proud, or more proud than tender; whether if we have the choice between two actresses we should rather elect her as Elizabeth who can express the offended queen with all the attributes of vengeful severity and majesty, or her who can play the jealous loving woman with all her injured feelings of slighted love, with all her readiness to pardon the beloved criminal, with all her anxiety at his obstinacy, her sorrow at his loss? And I say, the latter.

For, in the first place, the repetition of the same character is thus avoided. Essex is proud, and if Elizabeth is to be proud also, she must be so in a different way. If in the earl tenderness is subordinate to pride, in the queen tenderness must vanquish her pride. If Essex assumes a higher tone than belongs to him, then the queen must appear to be something less than she is. To let both walk on stilts, their noses in the air, looking down with contempt upon all around them, would be tedious monotony. We must not be led to think that Elizabeth, if she were in Essex's place, would act like Essex. The result shows that she is more flexible, she must therefore from the beginning be less haughty in her bearing. The person who is established by external position in a high place, needs to make less effort than he who has won this place through his own inner power. We know for all that, that Elizabeth is the queen, even if Essex gives himself more royal airs.

Secondly it is more fitting to tragedy that the characters should rise in their sentiments, not descend in them. It is preferable that a tender character should have moments of pride, rather than that a proud one should be carried away by tenderness. The one is elevating, the other rather the contrary. A grave queen, with wrinkled

brow, a look that intimidates all, a voice that alone would command obedience, if such a one breaks out into love-sick moans and sighs for the little satisfactions of her passions, it is almost, *almost* ludicrous. A lover on the other hand who is reminded by her jealousy that she is a queen, raises herself above herself, and her weakness becomes terrible.

No. 26

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The thirty-second evening 'Semiramis' by M. de Voltaire was repeated

Since the orchestra in our dramas in a measure fills the place of the ancient choruses, connoisseurs have long desired that the music played before and between the acts, should be more in accord with the substance of these acts Herr Scheibe is the first among musicians to perceive a wholly new field for art in this matter He has comprehended that if the emotions of the spectators are not to be weakened or broken in an unpleasant manner, every drama requires its own musical accompaniment. He therefore made the attempt as early as 1738 with 'Polyeucte' and 'Mithridates' to compose suitable symphonies to every play, and these were performed in the company of Neuber both here in Hamburg, and at Leipzig and elsewhere. Further he treated the subject in detail in a special journal, the *Critical Musician*, saying what the composer must observe chiefly who desires to work successfully in this new *genre*.

"All symphonies," he says, "that are composed to a drama must relate to its contents and nature. Consequently a different kind of symphony is required by a tragedy from that of a comedy And as various as are tragedies and comedies among themselves, so varied also must their music be Then too especial attention must be bestowed on the different divisions of the music necessitated by the play, so that every division corresponds to the nature of the dramatic divisions. Therefore the opening symphony must refer to the first act, while the symphonies that occur between the acts must correspond partly with the close of the foregoing, partly with the commencement

of the following act. and the last symphony be suited to the close of the last act.

"All symphonies to tragedies must be grand, vivacious, suggestive The characters of the chief personages and the chief plot must be carefully observed, so that the composition be arranged to accord. This is of no common importance. We find tragedies in which this or that virtue of hero or heroine is the subject-theme. If we contrast 'Polyeucte' with 'Brutus,' 'Alzire' with 'Mithridates,' we shall at once perceive that the same music by no means suits both. A tragedy in which religion and piety accompanies the hero through all vicissitudes, demands symphonies that reflect something of the solemnity and grandeur of church music If generosity, bravery, or endurance in all misfortunes mark the tragedy, then the music must be more vivacious and fiery. Of this latter nature are the tragedies 'Cato.' 'Brutus,' 'Mithridates' 'Alzire,' and 'Zaire,' on the other hand require a somewhat varied music, because the events and characters of each play are thus constituted and show more variety of emotion.

"In like manner comedy symphonies must be freer, more flowing. even playful; and yet in especial must also conform to the particular tendency of the comedy in question. As the comedy is now more serious, now amorous, now farcical, so also must the symphonies be constituted. . . .

"Opening symphonies must refer to the whole play and at the same time prepare for its commencement and thus harmonise with the first act. They can consist of two or three movements, as may seem good to the composer. But the symphonies between the acts, because they must refer to the foregoing and the coming act, should consist most naturally of two movements. The first can refer to the past, the second to the coming events. Still even this is only requisite when the emotions are too diverse, else one movement would suffice, if only it be of sufficient length to cover the necessities of the performance, such as snuffing the candles, changing of dresses, &c. The closing symphony must accord exactly with the close of the play, to

emphasise the occurrences to the spectators. What can be more ludicrous, than that the hero loses his life in an unhappy manner and a merry, lively symphony follows? And what can be more absurd than that a comedy ends happily and a sad and solemn symphony follows?

"Since however the music in plays is purely instrumental, a change of instruments is very needful, that the attention of the audience may be the more surely riveted, an attention that easily flags if the same instruments are always heard. It is just as needful though that the opening symphony should be full and strong and fall with weight upon the ear The change in the instruments must therefore chiefly occur between the acts. Judgment is needed to pronounce which instrument is best suited to the matter in hand and will express the most surely the desired emotion A sensible choice therefore must be made here also if a good and certain result is to be attained. It is especially reprehensible to change the same instruments in successive *entr'actes* It is always better and more agreeable to avoid the necessity for this."

These are the chief rules for bringing about a closer relation between music and poetry I have preferred to give them in the words of a musician rather than in my own, moreover in the words of him to whom belongs the honour of this invention. For poets and art-critics are not rarely censured by musicians, because they require and expect far more from them than their art is capable of producing. The majority must therefore be told by one of their own guild, that the matter is feasible before they will bestow the smallest attention upon it

True, it would be easy to make the rules; they only teach what should be, without saying how it can be. The expression of emotion, which is everything, remains solely the work of genius. For although there are and have been musicians who have succeeded marvellously, a philosopher is unquestionably needed who learns their method and knows how to deduce general principles from their examples And the more frequent these examples become, the more materials are collected for these deductions, the sooner may we look for them; and I am much in the wrong if a great step has not been

taken in this direction by the ardour of composers of such dramatic symphonies. In vocal music the text helps the expression too much, the weakest and most vacillating is strengthened and decided by the words. In instrumental music, on the contrary, this help is completely wanting and it says nothing if it does not say that which it would express very emphatically. The musician must employ his best power here, he must choose among the different successions of tones, only those that express an emotion most definitely. We shall hear these often, we shall compare them one with another, and through observation of what they have in common, we shall discover the secret of expression.

What an additional pleasure we shall thus derive from the theatre is self-evident. Since the beginning of the new management of our theatre pains have been taken with the orchestra and able men have been found willing to lend their hands and prepare models of this form of composition, that have succeeded beyond expectation. For 'Olindo and Sophronia.' Herr Hertel composed a special symphony, and the second representation of 'Semiramis' was marked by such a one from the hand of Herr Agricola of Berlin.

No 27.

I will endeavour to give an idea of Herr Agricola's music. Not however in its effects; for the more vivid and delicate a sensuous pleasure, the less can it be described in words; it is not possible to escape falling into general praise, vague exclamations and shrieking admirations, and these are as uninstructive to the amateur as they are nauseous to the master whom we seek to honour. No, I mean to speak merely of the intentions that the master has had and of the means he has employed to attain his end.

The opening symphony consists of three movements. The first movement is a largo with oboes and flutes beside violins; the bass part is strengthened by bassoons. The expression is serious, sometimes wild and agitated; the listener is to expect a drama of this nature. But not of this nature only; tenderness, remorse, conscience,

humility play their parts also, and the second movement, an andante with muted violins and bassoons, is occupied with mysterious and plaintive tones In the third movement the emotional and the stately tones are mingled, for the scene opens with unusual splendour, Semiramis is approaching the term of her glory and as this glory strikes the eye, so the ear also is to perceive it. The character is allegretto and the instruments are the same as in the previous movement, except that oboes, flutes and bassoon have phrases they play together.

The music between the acts has throughout only one single movement, whose expression refers to what has gone before. A second that refers to the coming does not seem to be approved by Herr Agricola. I am much of his opinion in this. For the music is to spoil nothing for the poet; the tragic poet loves the unexpected, the sudden, more than any other, he does not like to betray his design and the music would betray him if it indicated the coming passion It is different with the overture, it cannot refer to anything preceding, and even the overture must only indicate the general tendency of the play and not more strongly or decidedly than the title does. We may show the spectator the goal to which he is to attain, but the various paths by which he is to attain it, must be entirely hidden from him This reason against a second movement between the acts is derived from consideration for the poet, and is confirmed by another that belongs to the range of music For assuming that the passions which reign in two consecutive acts are opposed one to another, the two movements would naturally have to be of equally opposite character Now I can well comprehend how the poet can carry us over from any one passion to its very opposite without unpleasant violence, he does so gradually and slowly, he ascends the ladder rung by rung either up or down, without making any jump. But can the musician do this? Granted that he can do this in a piece of sufficient length, can he do so in two distinct, entirely opposed pieces, must not the jump from *e.g.* the calm to the stormy, from the tender to the cruel be necessarily very marked and have all the offensive traits that any sudden transition has in nature, such as from darkness to light,

from cold to heat? Now we melt with sympathy and suddenly we are to rage. Why? How? Against whom? Against the person for whom our soul was all pity? or against another? Music cannot define all this, it only leaves us in uncertainty and confusion; we feel without perceiving a correct sequence for our feelings: we feel as we do in a dream, and all these undefined sensations are more fatiguing than agreeable Now poetry never lets us lose the thread of our sensations, here we know not only what we are to feel, but also why we are to feel it, and only this knowledge makes the sudden transition not only bearable but also pleasant. Indeed this explanation of sudden transitions is one of the greatest advantages that music attains from its union with poetry, nay perhaps the very greatest. For it is not nearly so needful to confine general sensations in music, such as pleasure, to a certain individual cause for pleasure, because these dark uncertain sensations are still very agreeable. But it is needful to unite opposed and contradictory sensations by those definite ideas that words alone can convey, so that not only manifold things may be noticed but also the connexion existing between these manifold things. Now in the double movement adopted between the acts of a play, this connexion would only be subsequently explained; we should only learn afterwards why we must pass from one passion to another totally opposite, and that is as good as if we never knew, as far as the music is concerned The leap has had its bad effect and has not offended us the less because we now perceive it ought not to have offended us. Now it must not be supposed that hence all symphonies are to be condemned because the whole consists of several movements that are different one from another, and each of which expresses something different to the other. They express something different but not something opposed, or rather they express the same only in a different manner. A symphony that expresses, in its various movements, opposed passions, is a musical monster. Only one passion must rule in a symphony and each separate movement must enunciate and awaken in us the same passion, only with various modifications, according to the degree of its strength and vivacity or according to the varied inter-

mixture with cognate passions. The overture was entirely of this character, the impetuosity of the first movement melts into the pathos of the second, which is raised to a solemn dignity in the third A musician who takes greater liberties in his symphonies, who breaks off the emotion in every movement to commence a fresh and different emotion in the next, and then again lets this go, in order to throw himself into a third and different movement, may have spent much art, but uselessly; can surprise, confound, tickle, but cannot touch Whoever would speak to our hearts and awaken sympathetic emotions must observe the same sequence of idea as though he were instructing or enlightening our reason. Music is a vain sandheap if devoid of sequence and inner connexion of all and every part, it can make no permanent impression. Only proper connexion makes it into firm marble upon which the hand of the artist immortalises himself

The movement after the first act therefore seeks chiefly to keep up the anxiety of Semiramis to which the poet dedicated that act, anxieties that are still mingled with some hopes, an andante mesto, with muted violins and bass-viol

In the second act Assur plays too important a part but that he must rule the expression of the music. An *allegro assai* in G major with French horns, flutes and oboes, the bass part strengthened by a bassoon expresses the feelings of fear and doubt, mingled with ever-recurring pride that distinguish this faithless and imperious minister.

In the third act the ghost appears. At the first performance I remarked how little impression this apparition of Voltaire's makes on the audience But the musician has very properly taken no heed of this, he makes good what the poet has omitted and an allegro, E minor with the same instrumentation as the foregoing, only that E horns vary with G horns, express no mute and indolent astonishment, but the true dismay which such an apparition must evoke from the people.

Semiramis's anxiety in the fourth act rouses our pity; we pity her remorse though we know the full extent of her guilt The music also sounds the note of pity and

sympathy in a larghetto A minor, with muted violins and bass-viol and oboes.

At last there follows upon the fifth act one single movement, an adagio in E major, with violins and bass-viol, horns, and increased oboes and flutes and bassoons.

The expression is suited to the personages of the tragedy and characterised by dignity tending to grief, with some due regard, so it seems to me, to the last four lines in which Truth raises her warning voice with might and solemnity against the great ones of the earth.

To perceive the intentions of a musician means to admit to him that he has attained them. His work is not to be a riddle whose solution is as difficult as it is uncertain. Whatever a healthy ear quickly perceives, that and nothing else is what he desired to say; his merit increases with his lucidity; the easier, the more general he is of comprehension, the more he deserves praise. It is not praiseworthy in me that I have heard aright, but it is the greater praise for Herr Agricola that in this, his composition, no one has heard anything different from that which I have heard.

No. 28.

. . . . . .

On the thirty-fourth evening Regnard's 'Distrait' was performed.

Regnard first brought out his 'Distrait' in 1697 and it did not meet with the least favour. Thirty-four years later, when the comedians brought it out again, it found great favour. Which public was in the right? Perhaps neither of them were so far wrong. The severe public condemned the piece as no good formal comedy, as which no doubt the author issued it. The other public received it as nothing more than it is; a farce, an absurdity to make them laugh; they laughed and were thankful. The first public thought:—

> "non satis est risu diducere rictum
> Auditoris . . ."

and the second:—

> "Et est quædam tamen hic quoque virtus."

Excepting for the versification, which happens to be very faulty and careless, this comedy cannot have given Regnard much trouble. The character of his chief personage he found fully sketched in La Bruyère. He had nothing to do but to put the chief traits partly into action, partly to recount them. What he has added of his own is insignificant.

There is nothing to object to in this verdict, but against another criticism that attacks the poet on the score of morality, there is the more. An absent-minded person is said to be no *motif* for a comedy. And why not? To be absent, it is said, is a malady, a misfortune and no vice. An absent man deserves ridicule as little as one who has the headache. Comedy must only concern itself with such faults, as can be remedied. Whoever is absent by nature can merit this as little by means of ridicule, as though he limped.

But is it then true that absence of mind is a disease of the soul that cannot be cured with our best exertions? Is it really more a natural defect than a bad habit? I cannot believe it. For are we not masters of our attention? Is it not in our power to exert it, to abstract it, at will? And what else is absent-mindedness than a false use of our attention? The absent person thinks, only he does not think that which he should think in accordance with his present sensuous impressions. His mind is not asleep, not numbed, not inactive, it is only absent, busy elsewhere. But just as well as it can be elsewhere, so it could also be here; it is the mind's proper function to be present at the actual changes of the body. It costs pains to disaccustom the mind of this its proper function, and should it be impossible to accustom it again thereto?

Well, but now granted that absence of mind is incurable, where is it written that comedy should only laugh at moral faults, and not at incurable defects? Every absurdity, every contrast of reality and deficiency is laughable. But laughter and derision are far apart. We can laugh at a man, occasionally laugh about him, without in the least deriding him. Indisputable and well-known as this difference is, yet all the quibbles which Rousseau lately made against the use of comedy only

arose from the fact that he had not sufficiently regarded it. He says, for instance, Molière makes us laugh at a misanthrope and yet the misanthrope is the honest man of the play, Molière therefore shows himself an enemy to virtue in that he makes the virtuous man contemptible. Not so; the misanthrope does not become contemptible, he remains what he was, and the laughter that springs from the situations in which the poet places him does not rob him in the least of our esteem. The same with the *distrait*, we laugh at him, but do we despise him on that account? We esteem his other good qualities as we ought, why without them we could not even laugh at his absence of mind. Let a bad worthless man be endowed with this absence of mind, and then see whether we should still find it laughable? It will be disgusting, horrid, ugly, not laughable.

No. 29.

Comedy is to do us good through laughter; but not through derision; not just to counteract those faults at which it laughs, nor simply and solely in those persons who possess these laughable faults. Its true general use consists in laughter itself, in the practice of our powers to discern the ridiculous, to discern it easily and quickly under all cloaks of passion and fashion; in all admixture of good and bad qualities, even in the wrinkles of solemn earnestness. Granted that Molière's Miser never cured a miser; nor Regnard's Gambler, a gambler; conceded that laughter never could improve these fools; the worse for them, but not for comedy. It is enough for comedy that, if it cannot cure an incurable disease, it can confirm the healthy in their health. The Miser is instructive also to the extravagant man; and to him who never plays the Gambler may prove of use. The follies they have not got themselves, others may have with whom they have to live. It is well to know those with whom we may come into collision; it is well to be preserved from all impressions by example. A preservative is also a valuable medicine, and all morality has none more powerful and effective, than the ridiculous

. . . .

On the thirty-fifth evening 'Rodogune' by Pierre Corneille was performed in the presence of H.M. the King of Denmark.

Corneille owned that he set most store by this tragedy, that he held it far above his 'Cinna' and 'Cid,' that his other plays had few merits that were not to be found all united in this; a happy theme, a totally new creation, powerful verses, thorough reasoning, strong passions, and interest that increased from act to act.

It is but just that we should linger a while over this great man's masterpiece.

The story on which it is founded is told by Appianus Alexandrinus towards the end of his book on the Syrian Wars. "Demetrius, surnamed Nicanor, undertook a campaign against the Parthians, and lived as captive for some time at the court of the Parthian king, Phraates, with whose sister, Rodogune, he concluded an alliance. Meanwhile Diodotus, who had served the former kings, seized upon the Syrian throne, and placed upon it the son of Alexander Nothus, a mere child, under whose name he ruled as regent. After a while however he made away with the young king, placed himself on the throne and called himself Tryphon. When Antiochus, the brother of the captive king, heard at Rhodes of his fate and of the disorders in his kingdom, he returned to Syria, conquered Tryphon with much difficulty and caused him to be executed. Then he turned his arms against Phraates and demanded the release of his brother. Phraates, who feared the worst, did indeed release Demetrius, but nevertheless Antiochus and he came to a battle in which the latter was overcome and eventually killed himself. Demetrius after his return to his kingdom was murdered by his wife Cleopatra out of hatred against Rodogune, notwithstanding that Cleopatra herself, exasperated at this marriage, had united herself to Antiochus, the brother of Demetrius. She had two sons by Demetrius, of whom the eldest Seleucus, ascended the throne upon the death of his father, and whom she shot to death with an arrow, either because she feared he might avenge the death of his father upon her or because her cruel nature impelled her to this step. Her younger son, Antiochus, followed his brother in the

government and forced his atrocious mother to empty the poisoned cup she had prepared for him."

In this story lay matter for more than one tragedy. It would have cost Corneille little more invention to make for it a 'Tryphon,' an 'Antiochus,' a 'Demetrius,' a 'Seleucus,' than it cost him to make a 'Rodogune.' What chiefly interested him therein was the outraged wife who deems that she cannot avenge too fearfully the usurped rights of her rank and bed. He therefore selected her and it is unquestionable that his play ought consequently to have been named after Cleopatra and not Rodogune. He himself acknowledged this, and it was only that he feared confusion among his auditors between the Queen of Syria with that famous last Queen of Egypt of similar name, that he preferred to take his title from the second instead of the first character in his play, "I believed myself," he says, "the more entitled to make use of this liberty, since I had observed that the ancients themselves did not deem it necessary to call a play after its hero, but without scruple would even call it after the chorus, whose connexion with the action is far less and more episodic, than that of Rodogune. For instance Sophocles has named one of his tragedies the Trachiniæ which nowadays we rarely name otherwise than the dying Hercules." This observation is in itself quite correct, the ancients considered a title as quite unimportant, they did not deem in the least that it need indicate the contents, enough if it served to distinguish one play from another and for this the smallest circumstance suffices. Yet for all that I scarcely believe that Sophocles would to-day name 'Deianira' the play he called the Trachiniæ. He did not hesitate to give it an insignificant name, but to give it a deceptive name, a name that draws attention to a wrong point, he would doubtless have avoided. Corneille's fears went too far. Whoever knows the Egyptian Cleopatra knows also that Syria is not Egypt, that various kings and queens have borne the same names, but whoever does not know of the one cannot confound it with the other. At least Corneille need not have avoided the name Cleopatra so carefully in the play itself; the first act loses thereby in lucidity, and the German translator did

well to disregard this. No writer, and least of all a poet, must assume his readers to be so very ignorant; he may even at times think that what they do not know, they may inquire about.

No. 30.

Cleopatra, in history, murders her husband, shoots one of her sons and wishes to poison the other. Beyond question one crime sprang out of another and they all sprang from one and the same source. At least it can be assumed with probability that the jealousy that can make an enraged wife can make an equally angered mother. To see a second wife placed in the same rank with herself, to share with such a one the love of her husband and the dignity of her station, quickly ripened the resolve in a proud and sensitive heart, not to possess that which it could not possess alone. Demetrius must not live because he will not live for Cleopatra alone. The guilty husband falls, but in him falls also a father who leaves avenging sons. The mother had not thought of these in the heat of her passions, or only thought of them as *her* sons of whose submission she was assured or whose filial zeal would infallibly choose for the party first offended if they must choose between the parents She did not find it thus. The son became king, and the king saw in Cleopatra not the mother but the regicide. She had everything to fear from him and from that moment he had all to fear from her. Jealousy still boiled in her heart, the faithless spouse still lived in his sons, she began to hate all that recalled to her that she ever loved him and self-preservation strengthened this hate. The mother was readier than the son, the offending woman readier than the offended man; she executed her second murder in order to have executed the first unpunished; she executed it upon her son and satisfied herself by the representation that she was only executing it upon one who had resolved on her own destruction, that she was not really murdering but only preventing her own murder The fate of the eldest son would also have been the fate of the younger, only he was readier or luckier. He forced his mother to drink the poison she had prepared for him; one inhuman crime avenges the

other, and it only depends on the circumstances on which side we feel most disgust or sympathy.

This triple murder should constitute only one action, that has its beginning, its centre and its end in the one passion of one person. What therefore does it lack as the subject for a tragedy? Nothing for genius, everything for a bungler. Here there is no love, no entanglement, no recognition, no unexpected marvellous occurrence; everything proceeds naturally. This natural course tempts genius and repels the bungler. Genius is only busied with events that are rooted in one another, that form a chain of cause and effect. To reduce the latter to the former, to weigh the latter against the former, everywhere to exclude chance, to cause everything that occurs to occur so that it could not have happened otherwise, this is the part of genius when it works in the domains of history and converts the useless treasures of memory into nourishment for the soul. Wit on the contrary, that does not depend on matters rooted in each other, but on the similar or dissimilar, if it ventures on a work that should be reserved to genius alone, detains itself with such events that have not further concern with one another except that they have occurred at the same time. To connect these, to interweave and confuse their threads so that we lose the one at every moment in following out the other and are thrown from one surprise into another, this is the part of wit and this only. From the incessant crossing of such threads of opposed colours results a texture, which is to art what weavers call *changeant:* a material of which we cannot say whether it be blue or red, green or yellow; it is both, it seems this from one side, that from another, a plaything of fashion, a juggling trick for children

Now judge whether the great Corneille has used his theme like a genius or like a wit. For this judgment nothing else is required but the application of the axiom, disputed by none: Genius loves simplicity, and wit complication.

In history Cleopatra murders her spouse from jealousy. From jealousy? thought Corneille· Why that would be quite like a common woman; no, my Cleopatra must be a heroine who would even gladly have lost her husband but

on no account her throne. That her husband loves Rodogune must not pain her as much as that Rodogune is to be a queen like herself; this is far more elevated in idea.

Quite true; far more elevated and—far more unnatural. For to begin with, pride is a far more unnatural, a more artificial, vice than jealousy. Secondly the pride of a woman is still more unnatural than the pride of a man. Nature has formed the female sex to love, not to enact violence, it is to awaken tenderness, not fear, only its charms are to render it powerful; it should only rule by caresses and should not desire to rule over more than it can enjoy. A woman who likes ruling merely for its own sake, all of whose inclinations are subordinate to ambition, who knows no other happiness than to command, to tyrannise, to put her foot on the necks of nations; such a woman may have existed once or more than once, but nevertheless she is an exception and whoever paints an exception, unquestionably paints what is against nature. Corneille's Cleopatra who is such a woman, who allows herself every crime to gratify her ambition, her offended pride, who casts about her Machiavellian maxims, is a monster of her sex, and Medea is amiable and virtuous as compared with her. For all the cruelties committed by Medea, she commits from jealousy. I will forgive all to a tender jealous woman, she is what she should be, only to excess. But a woman who commits crimes from deliberate ambition and cold pride revolts our heart and all the art of the poet cannot render her interesting. We gaze at her with wonder as we gaze at a monstrosity and when we have sated our curiosity, we thank Heaven that nature only errs like this once in a thousand years and are vexed with the poet who wishes to pass off such abortions as human beings whom it is good for us to know. If we go through all history, among fifty women who have dethroned or murdered their husbands, there is scarcely one of whom we could not prove that offended love drove her to this step From mere love of dominion, from mere pride to sway the sceptre that had been borne by a loving husband, scarcely one has so far forgotten herself. It is true that many who have thus usurped government as offended wives have ruled afterwards with

all manly pride. They had too well learnt the wounding power of subjection by the sides of their cold, morose, faithless husbands, so that their independence, attained by means of extreme danger, was the more precious to them. But surely none thought or felt within herself what Corneille lets his Cleopatra say of herself; the most senseless bravado of crime. The great criminal knows how to excuse himself to himself, tries to persuade himself that the crime he commits is no such great crime, or that unavoidable necessity makes him commit it. It is against all nature that he should boast of vice as vice; and the poet is to be extremely censured who from mere desire to say something that is dazzling or strong, lets us misread the human heart as if its fundamental inclinations could thus turn to evil for evil's sake.

Such distorted characters, such shuddering tirades are more frequent with Corneille than any other poet and it may easily be that he founds his surname the Great, in part on these. It is true, everything with him breathes of heroism, even that which should not be capable of it and is not capable of it, namely vice. The Monstrous, the Gigantic they should call him, not the Great. For nothing is great that is not true.

No. 31.

In history Cleopatra only avenges herself upon her husband, she would not or could not avenge herself on Rodogune. With the poet this vengeance is long past; the murder of Demetrius is only recounted and all the action of the play concerns Rodogune. Corneille will not suffer his Cleopatra to halt half-way; she must deem herself unavenged so long as she has not avenged herself on Rodogune. It is certainly natural to a jealous woman to be still more implacable to her rival than to her faithless husband. But Corneille's Cleopatra, as I said, is little or not at all jealous, she is only ambitious, and the revenge of an ambitious woman should never resemble that of a jealous one. The two passions are too diverse for their expressions to be the same. Ambition is never without a kind of nobility, and revenge is too much opposed

to nobility for the revenge of an ambitious person to be without bounds. So long as he pursues his object, it knows no limits; but scarcely has it attained this, scarcely is the passion appeased, than revenge begins to grow colder and calmer. It is proportioned not so much to the disadvantages that have been suffered, as to those that are still to be feared. Whoever can no longer harm the ambitious man, of him he forgets that he has harmed him. Whomsoever he has not to fear, he despises, and he whom he despises is far beneath his revenge. Jealousy on the other hand is a form of envy, and envy is a petty crawling vice that knows no other satisfaction than the total destruction of its object. It is a furious fire, nothing can mollify it, since the offence that has awakened it never can cease to remain the same offence, and as it grows the longer it lasts, so jealousy's thirst for vengeance is never quenched and will be executed late or early with the self-same fury. Just so the vengeance of Corneille's Cleopatra, and the dissonance therefore with which this vengeance appears in her character, can be nothing but highly offensive. Her cunning wrath, her envious vengeance against a person from whom she has nothing further to fear, whom she has in her power, whom she ought to forgive if she had the least spark of generosity, the careless levity with which she not alone commits crimes but with which also she suggests crimes the most senseless and barefaced to others, makes her so petty that we cannot despise her enough. This contempt must at last overpower our admiration and there remains of the whole Cleopatra only an ugly loathsome woman who is for ever raging and reviling and who deserves the first place in a madhouse.

But not enough that Cleopatra revenges herself on Rodogune, the poet decrees that she shall do so in quite an exceptional mode. How does he set about this? If Cleopatra had despatched Rodogune herself the thing would have been too natural, for what is more natural than to kill an enemy? Could it not be brought about that a loving woman were killed in her at the same time? And that she should be killed by her lover? Why not? Let us imagine that Rodogune was not fully married to Deme-

trius; let us imagine that after his death both of his sons became enamoured of his betrothed; let us imagine that the sons were twins, that the throne pertains to the elder and that the mother has ever kept secret which is the elder of the two; let us imagine that the mother has at last resolved to ıeveal this secret, or rather not to reveal it but to declare instead that that one is the elder and shall ascend the throne who will consent to a certain condition; let us imagine that this condition is the death of Rodogune. We should then have what we desire to have; both princes are deeply in love with Rodogune, whoeveı of them will kill his beloved, he shall reign.

Very good; but can we not complicate the action yet faıtheı? Can we not place the good princes in yet greater straits? We will try. Let us therefore imagine that Rodogune learns Cleopatra's plan; let us further imagine that she loves one of the princes, but that she has not revealed it to him, nor will reveal it to him or any one; that she is firmly resolved not to choose as her husband either the beloved one, or the one to whom the throne shall accrue, but only him who shall prove himself most worthy. Rodogune must be avenged, avenged on the mother of the princes; Rodogune must declare to them, whichever of you desires me, let him murder his mother!

Bravo! I call that something like an intrigue! These princes have fared well, they will have much to do to extricate themselves! The mother says to them: Whoever of you would rule, let him murder his beloved! And the beloved says: Whoever would have me, let him murder his mother! It is a matter of course that these princes must be very virtuous and love one another from the bottom of their hearts, that they must have much respect for their devil of a mamma and as much tenderness for their amorous fury of a mistress. For if they are not both very virtuous, then the complication is not so bad as it seems; or it is too bad so that it is not possible to disentangle it. One goes and kills the princess in order to have the throne and the thing is done. Or the other goes and kills his mother to have the princess and the

thing is done again. Or they both kill their love and both want to have the throne; and so the story cannot end. Or they both kill their mother and both want to have their love, and again it cannot end. But if they are both so nice and virtuous, neither of them will kill the one or the other, they both stand still prettily and gape open-mouthed and do not know what to do; and that is just the beauty of it. True the play will thereby assume the very strange aspect that its women will be worse than its men, and the men act more womanishly than the feeblest woman, but what matters that? Rather it is an additional merit in the play, for the contrary is so common, so hackneyed!

But to be serious; I do not know whether it costs much trouble to make such inventions, I have never attempted it, it is hardly likely that I shall ever attempt it. But this I know, it is very hard work to digest such inventions.

Not because they are mere inventions, because not the faintest trace of them is to be found in history. Corneille might have spared himself this consideration. "Perhaps," he says, "we may question whether the liberty of poetry may extend so far as to invent a whole history under familiar names, as I have done here, where after the recital in the first act which is the foundation of the following, up to the effects of the fifth, not the smallest thing occurs that has any historical veracity. But," he continues, "it seems to me that if we only retain the results of a history, all the surrounding circumstances all the introductions to these results are in our power. At least I can recall no rule against this, and the example of the ancients is wholly on my side. For compare Sophocles's 'Electra' with the 'Electra' of Euripides and see whether they have more in common than the mere result, the last occurrence in the history of their heroine at which each one arrives on a different path by different means, so that one at least must be the total invention of their author. Or let us regard 'Iphigenia in Tauris' which Aristotle names the model of a perfect tragedy and that yet has greatly the appearance of being a complete invention, seeing it is only founded

on the circumstance that Diana removes Iphigenia from the altar on which she is to be sacrificed in a cloud and places a deer in her stead. Then the 'Helena' of Euripides deserves especial comment, where the main action, as well as the episodes, the entanglement and the *dénouement* are entirely fictitious and borrow nothing save their names, from history."

Certainly it was permissible to Corneille to treat historical events at his discretion. For instance he might assume Rodogune to be as young as he pleased, and Voltaire is much in the wrong when he again here reckons out of history that Rodogune cannot have been so young because she had married Demetrius when the young princes, who must now be at least twenty, were in their infancy. What does that concern the poet? His Rodogune did not marry Demetrius; she was very young when the father wanted to marry her and not much older when the sons became enamoured of her. Voltaire with his historical censorship is quite unbearable. If only instead he would verify the dates in his General History of the World!

No. 32.

Corneille could have gone back still further for examples from the ancients. Many really deemed that tragedy in Greece was invented to keep alive the memory of great and marvellous events, that its first purpose had been to tread carefully in the footprints of history and to diverge neither to right nor left. But they are mistaken. For Thespis already left historical accuracy quite unregarded.[1] He brought upon himself sharp rebuke from Solon on that account. But without saying that Solon understood legislation better than poetics, the conclusion which might be drawn from his rebuke can be evaded in a different manner. Under Thespis art already employed all privileges before it could prove itself worthy of these on the score of utility. Thespis pondered, invented, let familiar personages say and do what he desired, but he perhaps did not know how to make his inventions probable

[1] Diogenes Laertius, lib. i. § 59.

and instructive. Solon therefore perceived in them only the untrue, without the least suspicion of their utility. He was jealous against a poison, which can easily be of ill effect if it does not bear with it its antidote.

I greatly fear that Solon would also have named the invention of the great Corneille nothing but miserable lies. For wherefore all these inventions? Do they render anything more probable in the history wherewith he overloads them? They are not even probable in themselves, Corneille boasted of them as very wonderful exertions of his power of invention, and yet he should have known that not the mere fact of invention, but invention conformable to its purpose, marks a creative mind.

The poet finds in history a woman who murders her husband and sons. Such indeed can awaken terror and pity and he takes hold of it to treat it as a tragedy. But history tells him no more than the bare fact and this is as horrible as it is unusual. It furnishes at most three scenes, and, devoid of all detailed circumstances, three improbable scenes. What therefore does the poet do?

As he deserves this name more or less, the improbability or the meagre brevity will seem to him the greatest want in this play.

If he be in the first condition, he will consider above all else how to invent a series of causes and effects by which these improbable crimes could be accounted for most naturally. Not satisfied with resting their probability upon historical authority, he will endeavour so to construct the characters of his personages, will endeavour so to necessitate one from another the events that place his characters in action, will endeavour to define the passions of each character so accurately, will endeavour to lead these passions through such gradual steps, that we shall everywhere see nothing but the most natural and common course of events. Thus with every step we see his personages take, we must acknowledge that we should have taken it ourselves under the same circumstances and the same degree of passion, and hence nothing will repel us but the imperceptible approach to a goal from which our imagination shrinks, and where we suddenly find

ourselves filled with profound pity for those whom a fatal stream has carried so far, and full of terror at the consciousness that a similar stream might also thus have borne ourselves away to do deeds which in cold blood we should have regarded as far from us. If the poet takes this line, if his genius tells him that he cannot ignobly falter in its course, then the meagre brevity of his fable has vanished at once, it no longer distresses him how he shall fill his five acts with so few events, he is only afraid lest five acts should not suffice for all his material, that enlarges more and more under his treatment now that he has discovered its hidden organisation and understands how to unravel it.

Meantime the poet who less deserves this name, who is nothing but an ingenious fellow, a good versifier, he, I say, will find so little obstacle in the improbability of his scheme that he actually seeks therein its claim to admiration, which he must on no account diminish if he would not deprive himself of the surest means to evoke pity and terror. For he knows so little wherein this pity and terror really consist that in order to evoke them he thinks he cannot pile up enough marvellous, unexpected, incredible and abnormal matters and thinks he must ever have recourse to extraordinary and horrible misfortunes and crimes. Scarcely therefore has he scented in history a Cleopatra, the murderess of her husband and sons, than he sees nothing further to do, in order to form this into a tragedy, than to fill in the interstices between the two crimes and to fill it with matter as strange as the crimes themselves. All this, his invention and the historical materials, he kneads into a very long, very incomprehensible romance, and when he has kneaded it as well as flour and straw can be kneaded together, he places his paste upon the skeleton wires of acts and scenes, relates and relates, rants and rhymes, and in four to six weeks, according as rhyming is easy or difficult to him, the wonderwork is finished; is called a tragedy, is printed and performed, read and looked at, admired or hissed, retained or forgotten as good luck will have it. For *habent sua fata libelli.*

May I presume to apply this to the great Corneille?

Or must I still make this application? According to the secret fate that rules over writings as over men, his 'Rodogune' has been held for more than a hundred years the greatest masterpiece of the greatest tragical poet of all France and has occasionally been admired by all Europe. Can an admiration of a hundred years be groundless? Where have mankind so long concealed their eyes, their emotions? Was it reserved from 1644 to 1767 to a Hamburg dramatic critic to see spots in the sun and to debase a planet to a meteor?

Oh no! Already in the last century a certain honest Huron was imprisoned in the Bastille at Paris, he found time hang heavy on his hands although he was in Paris, and from sheer *ennui* he studied the French poets, and this Huron could not take pleasure in 'Rodogune.' After this there lived, somewhere in Italy at the beginning of this century, a pedant who had his head full of the tragedies of the Greeks and of his countrymen of the sixteenth century and he also found much to censure in 'Rodogune.' Finally a few years ago there was a Frenchman, a great admirer of Corneille's name, who because he was rich and had a good heart, took pity on the poor deserted granddaughter of the great poet, had her educated under his eyes, taught her to make pretty verses, collected alms for her, wrote a large lucrative commentary to the works of her grandfather as her dowry, and so forth; yet even he declared 'Rodogune' to be a very absurd play, and was utterly amazed how so great a man as the great Corneille, could write such wretched stuff. Under one of these the above dramatic critic must have gone to school and most probably under the last named, for it is always a Frenchman who opens the eyes of a foreigner to the faults of a Frenchman Beyond question he repeats after him; or if not after him, after the Italian, or perhaps even after Huron. From one of these he must have learnt it For that a German should think of himself, should of himself have the audacity to doubt the excellence of a Frenchman, who could conceive such a thing? . . . .

No. 33.

On the thirty-sixth evening (Friday, July 3rd) M. Favart's comedy 'Soliman the Second' was performed, also in the presence of H.M. the King of Denmark

I do not care to examine how far history confirms that Soliman the Second became enamoured of a European slave, who knew so well how to enchain him and train him to her will that, contrary to all the customs of his realm, he caused himself to be formally united to her and had to declare her as empress. Enough that Marmontel has founded on this one of his moral tales, in which however he changes this slave, said to have been an Italian, into a Frenchwoman, beyond question because he considered it as too unlikely that any other beauty but a French one, could have carried off such a rare victory over a Grand Turk.

I do not know what to say to Marmontel's tale. It is not that it is not told with much wit, and with all the subtle knowledge of the world, its vanities, its absurdities, as well as with the elegance and grace that distinguish this author. From this side it is excellent, charming. But it is intended for a moral tale, and I cannot find where its morality resides. Certainly it is not as licentious and offensive as a tale by La Fontaine or Grécourt; but is it moral because it is not absolutely immoral?

A Sultan who yawns in the lap of luxury, to whom its too easy and every-day enjoyment has made it distasteful and repulsive, whose relaxed nerves must be contracted and irritated by something quite new and peculiar; whom the most subtle sensuality, the most refined tenderness woo in vain; this sick libertine is the suffering hero of the story. I say the suffering because the glutton has impaired his digestion by too many sweets Nothing more will taste good to him, until at last he discovers something that would revolt every healthy stomach; rotten eggs, rats' tails and *pâté* of caterpillars; those he likes. The noblest, most modest beauty, with a large, blue, languishing eye, with an innocent sensitive soul, commands the Sultan—until he has won her. Another, majestic in form, dazzling in colour, flowery words on her

lips, fascinating tones in her sweet voice, a very muse, only more seductive is—enjoyed and forgotten. At last there appears a female thing, flippant, careless, wild, witty to the verge of immodesty, merry to madness, much physiognomy, little beauty, a figure more *mignonne* than well formed, this thing, when the Sultan sees it, tumbles down upon him with the grossest flattery: Grâce au ciel, voici une figure humaine! And like this opening compliment, so all else. Vous êtes beaucoup mieux, qu'il n'appartient à un Turc; vous avez même quelque chose d'un Français —En vérité ces Turcs sont plaisants.—Je me charge d'apprendre à vivre à ce Turc —Je ne désespère pas d'en faire quelque jour un Français.—And the thing gets its way. It laughs and scolds, threatens and mocks, ogles and mouths, until the Sultan, after having changed the whole aspect of the seraglio to please it, further changes the laws of the realm and runs danger of revolting the clergy and the mob against him, if he insists on becoming happy with it after the fashion of those others who have been so, according to its own confession, in its fatherland Was it worth all this trouble?

Marmontel begins his tale with the observation that great changes in a state have often arisen from petty causes and lets the Sultan conclude with the secret question to himself how is it possible that a little turned-up nose could subvert the laws of a kingdom? We are almost led to believe that he desired to illustrate by example this observation and this seeming misrelation between cause and effect. But such a teaching would unquestionably be too general, and Marmontel discovers in his preface that he had a far other and more specific aim in view. "I wished," he says, "to expose the folly of those who desire to bring a female to complaisance by force and by looks; I therefore chose as an example a sultan and a slave as the two extremes of dominion and dependence." But Marmontel must surely have lost sight of this intention during his elaboration of the theme, for nothing aims thither, not the smallest forcible endeavour is seen on the part of the Sultan. The first insolent speeches spoken to him by the gay Frenchwoman, reduce him to the most reticent, obedient, complaisant, yielding,

subservient husband, *la meilleure pâte de mari*, than whom France would scarcely furnish a better. In a word; either there is no moral in this story of Marmontel's. or it is that which I have indicated above in the character of the Sultan, the beetle after he has roamed among all the flowers, at last ends on the dung-heap.

But moral or no moral, it is the same thing to a dramatic poet whether a general truth can be deduced or no from his fable, and Marmontel's story was neither more nor less fitted to be brought out on the theatre on that account. Favart has done this, and very happily. I counsel all who desire to enrich the theatre from similar tales to compare Favart's performance with Marmontel's original matter. If they possess the gift of deduction. the smallest change this has suffered and had to suffer, will prove instructive, and their feelings will lead them to discover many manœuvres which would have remained hidden from mere speculation and which no critic has as yet generalised into rules, though it well merits this, and would often bring more truth and life into their plays. than all the mechanical laws with which the shallow art critic deals. . . .

I will pause over but one of these changes But first I must quote the judgment given by the French themselves on this play.[1] At first they expressed doubts against Marmontel's foundation. "Soliman the Second," they said, "was one of the greatest princes of his century, the Turks have no sultan whose memory they revere more than that of Soliman; his conquests, his talents and virtues made him respected even by the enemies whom he subjugated. Now what a miserable petty part does Marmontel cause him to play! According to history Roxelane was a cunning ambitious woman. who, to gratify her pride was capable of the boldest blackest deeds, who knew how, by means of wiles and false tenderness, to bring the Sultan so far as to cause him to rage in fury against his own kindred and stain his fame by the execution of his innocent son. And this Roxelane is, according to Marmontel, a little foolish coquette like any that flutters about

[1] Journ Encyclop, Janvier 1762.

Paris, her head full of wind and a heart rather good than bad Are such mummeries permissible? May a poet or a narrator, if we permit him any amount of liberty, extend this liberty over well-known characters? If he may change facts according to his good-will, may he then depict a Lucretia prostituted and a libertine Socrates?"

Undoubtedly this would be going too far. I should not like to undertake the justification of Marmontel, I have further expressed my views that characters must be more sacred to a poet than facts. For one reason, because if characters are carefully observed in so far as the facts are a consequence of the characters, they cannot of themselves prove very diverse; while the self-same facts can be deduced from totally different characters; secondly, because what is instructive is not contained in the mere facts but in the recognition that these characters under these circumstances would and must evolve these facts. Now Marmontel has reversed this. That there was once in the seraglio a European slave who knew how to raise herself to be the legal wife of the sultan, that is a fact. The character of this slave and this sultan denote the manner how this fact came about, and as it was possible by means of more than one kind of character, it is certainly open to the poet, as a poet, to choose which form he wills, whether that which history ratifies or any other, according as it be suited to the moral intention he has in his play. Only if he chooses other and even opposed characters to the historical, he should refrain from using historical names, and rather credit totally unknown personages with well-known facts than invent characters to well-known personages The one mode enlarges our knowledge or seems to enlarge it and is thus agreeable The other contradicts the knowledge that we already possess and is thus unpleasant We regard the facts as something accidental, as something that may be common to many persons, the characters we regard as something individual and intrinsic The poet may take any liberties he likes with the former so long as he does not put the facts into contradiction with the characters; the characters he may place in full light but he may not change them, the smallest change seems to destroy their individuality and

to substitute in their place other persons, false persons, who have usurped strange names and pretend to be what they are not

No. 34.

And yet it seems to me a far more pardonable fault not to give to personages characters that history has given them than to offend in these freely chosen characters in the point of intrinsic truth or instructiveness The first fault can exist together with genius, but not the second. It is permitted to genius not to know a thousand things that every schoolboy knows. Not the accumulated stores of his memory, but that which he makes out of himself, which he brings forth out of his own feelings, constitute his riches[1]; what he has heard or read he has either forgotten or does not care to know beyond the point where it suits his end. He blunders therefore now from pride, now with, now without intention, so often, and so grossly, that we other good people cannot marvel enough; we stand still and wonder and cry out. "But no! how could a great man not know better? How is it possible he did not remember? did he not think?" Oh let us be silent; we think that we will humble him and we only make ourselves ridiculous. All we know better than he only proves that we went to school more diligently than he, and that was very needful to us if we were not to turn out complete dunces.

Marmontel's Soliman might for all I cared have been quite another Soliman and his Roxelane quite another Roxelane than history taught me: if only I had found that though they are not of this real world they could have belonged to another world, a world whose events might be connected in a different order but still connected logically as they are here; a world in which cause and effect may follow in a different order but yet follow to the general effect of good; in short to a world of genius, a world that endeavours to copy in miniature the Highest Genius and transposes, exchanges, reduces, increases the various particles of the present world in order to form a whole therefrom that should harmonise with his own aims

[1] Pindar, Olymp II. 10

and ends. And since I do not find this latter in the work of Marmontel, I can be content that he should not be allowed to go scot-free of the former. Whoever cannot, or will not indemnify us, must not offend us purposely. And here Marmontel has really offended, it may be that he could not or would not do otherwise.

For according to the indicated conception that we make to ourselves of genius, we are justified in demanding purpose and harmony in all the characters a poet creates; that is if he demands from us that we should regard him in the light of a genius.

Harmony, for nothing in the characters must be contradictory; they must ever remain uniform and inherently themselves, they must express themselves now with emphasis, now more slightly as events work upon them, but none of the events must be mighty enough to change black to white. The Turk despot must, even when he is in love, remain a Turkish despot. The Turk who only knows sensual love, must not think of any of the little refinements that a pampered European imagination connects therewith. "I am weary of these caressing machines, their soft pliability has nothing attractive, nothing complimentary; I want to have difficulties to overcome, and when I have overcome them I want to be kept in breath by new difficulties." A King of France may think thus, but no Sultan. It is true, if once we give a Sultan such a form of thought, the despot is lost to view, he himself puts off his despotism in order to enjoy a more spontaneous love; but will he therefore suddenly become the tame monkey whom a bold acrobat can force to dance whenever she wills? Marmontel says. Soliman was too great a man to conduct the little affairs of his seraglio on the same footing with more important State affairs Very good, but then he should not in the end have conducted great State affairs on the footing of the little affairs of his seraglio. For to a great man both things are needful; to treat trifles as trifles and important matters as important matters. He sought, as Marmontel makes him say, free hearts who should suffer slavery gladly from mere love for his person, he had found such a heart in Elmire; but does he know what he desires? The tender Elmire is set aside

for a voluptuous Delia, until a thoughtless woman entraps him and makes him into a slave before he has enjoyed the dubious favour that until now was the death of his desires. Will it not also be so here? I must laugh at the good Sultan and yet he deserves my sincere pity. If Elmire and Delia lose everything after enjoyment that before charmed him, what will Roxelane retain after this critical moment? Eight days after her coronation will he hold it worth while to have made this sacrifice to her? I greatly fear that after the very first day he will see in his wedded Sultana nothing save her confident impudence and her turned-up nose. It seems to me I hear him exclaim: By Mahomet! where have my eyes been!

I do not mean to assert that all these contradictions that make Soliman's character so contemptible and mean, need prove that such a character could not exist. There are enough people who combine yet more contemptible contradictions. But on this very account they must not be subjects for poetical imitation. They are beneath poetry, for they lack instructive qualities; unless indeed we employed their very contradictions, and their absurd or unhappy consequences as instructive elements, but this was evidently not Marmontel's design in his Soliman. Now a character in which the instructive is lacking, lacks purpose.

To act with a purpose is what raises man above the brutes, to invent with a purpose, to imitate with a purpose, is that which distinguishes genius from the petty artists who only invent to invent, imitate to imitate. They are content with the small enjoyment that is connected with their use of these means, and they make these means to be their whole purpose and demand that we also are to be satisfied with this lesser enjoyment, which springs from the contemplation of their cunning but purposeless use of their means. It is true that genius begins to learn from such miserable imitations; they are its preliminary studies. It also employs them in larger works for amplification and to give resting-places to our warmer sympathy, but with the construction and elaboration of its chief personages it combines larger and wider intentions; the intention to instruct us what we should do or avoid; the intention to make us acquainted with the

actual characteristics of good and bad, fitting and absurd. It also designs to show us the good in all their combinations and results still good and happy even in misery; the bad as revolting and unhappy even in happiness. When its plot admits of no such immediate imitation, no such unquestionable warning, genius still aims at working upon our powers of desire and abhorrence with objects that deserve these feelings, and ever strives to show these objects in their true light, in order that no false light may mislead us as to what we should desire, what we should abhor.

Now what of all this exists in the characters of Soliman and Roxelane? As I have said, nothing. But there is a great deal of the contrary. A couple of persons whom we ought to despise, of which one should fill us with disgust and the other with anger; a blunted sensualist, a prostitute, are painted in the most seductive and attractive colours, so that I should not wonder if many a husband held himself justified in being weary of his legitimate, lovely and amiable wife because she was an Elmire and no Roxelane.

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No. 35.

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I have once before, elsewhere, drawn the distinction that exists between the action in an Æsopian fable and a drama What is valid for the former, is valid for every moral tale that intends to bring a general moral axiom before our intuition. We are satisfied if this intention is fulfilled and it is the same to us whether this is so by means of a complete action that is in itself a rounded whole, or no The poet may conclude wherever he wills as soon as he sees his goal. It does not concern him what interest we may take in the persons through whom he works out his intention; he does not want to interest but to instruct us, he has to do with our reason, not with our heart, this latter may or may not be satisfied so long as the other is illumined. Now drama on the contrary makes no claim upon a single definite axiom flowing out of its story. It aims at the passions which the course and

events of its fable arouse and treat, or it aims at the pleasure accorded by a true and vivid delineation of characters and habits. Both require a certain integrity of action, a certain harmonious end which we do not miss in the moral tale because our attention is solely directed to the general axiom of whose especial application the story affords such an obvious instance.

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No. 36.

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Let us instance the Matron of Ephesus. This acrid fable is well known, it is unquestionably the bitterest satire that was ever made on female frivolity. It has been recounted a thousand times after Petronius, and since it pleased even in the worst copy, it was thought that the subject must be an equally happy one for the stage. Houdar de la Motte and others made the attempt, but I appeal to all good taste as to the results of these attempts. The character of the matron in the story provokes a not unpleasant sarcastic smile at the audacity of wedded love; in the drama this becomes repulsive, horrible. In the drama the soldier's persuasions do not seem nearly so subtle, importunate, triumphant, as in the story.

In the story we picture to ourselves a sensitive little woman who is really in earnest in her grief, but succumbs to temptation and to her temperament, her weakness seems the weakness of her sex, we therefore conceive no especial hatred towards her, we deem that what she does, nearly every woman would have done Even her suggestion to save her living lover by means of her dead husband we think we can forgive her because of its ingenuity and presence of mind; or rather its very ingenuity leads us to imagine that this suggestion may have been appended by the malicious narrator who desired to end his tale with some right poisonous sting. Now in the drama we cannot harbour this suggestion; what we hear has happened in the story, we see really occur; what we would doubt of in the story, in the drama the evidence of our own eyes settles incontrovertibly. The mere possibility of such an action diverted us; its reality

shows it in all its atrocity, the suggestion amused our fancy, the execution revolts our feelings, we turn our backs to the stage and say with the Lykas of Petronius, without being in Lykas's peculiar position: "Si justus Imperator fuisset, debuit patris familiæ corpus in monimentum referre, mulierem adfigere cruci." And she seems to us the more to deserve this punishment, the less art the poet has expended on her seduction, for we do not then condemn in her weak woman in general, but an especially volatile, worthless female in particular. In short, in order happily to bring Petronius's fable on the stage it should preserve its end and yet not preserve it; the matron should go as far and yet not as far. The explanation of this another time.

On the thirty-eighth evening 'Merope' by M. de Voltaire was performed.

Voltaire composed this tragedy at the instigation of Maffei's 'Merope,' probably in the year 1737, probably at Circy when with his Urania, the Marquise du Châtelet. For already in January 1783 the MS. was at Paris in the hands of Father Brumoy, who as a Jesuit and the author of the Théâtre des Grecs was the most fitted to awaken interest in its favour and to prepare the metropolis to receive it with due respect. Brumoy showed the MS. to the author's friends, and among others he sent it to old Father Tournemine, who greatly flattered at being consulted by his dear son Voltaire, concerning a tragedy and a matter about which he did not understand much, wrote a letter full of praise of it, which was then printed in the preface of the play and serves as a lesson and a warning to all officious art critics. He calls the play one of the most perfect tragedies, a very model, and we may consequently now make ourselves quite happy that the play of Euripides on the same theme has been lost, or rather it is no longer lost for Voltaire has restored it.

Now greatly though all this should have pacified Voltaire, yet he did not seem to hurry himself with its representation, which only took place in 1743. He earned all the full fruits he could have anticipated from his statesmanlike procrastination. 'Merope' met with extraordinary success and the pit showed an honour to the poet

of which up till that time there had been no instance. It is true that the great Corneille was well received by the public, his chair on the stage was always left unoccupied even when the crowd was very great and when he came every one rose up, a distinction which in France is only shown to princes of the royal blood. Corneille was regarded as at home in the theatre and when the master of the house appears, what more becoming than that his guests show their deference? But quite other honours were reserved for Voltaire; the pit was anxious to know in person the man they so greatly admired and they called and exclaimed and clamoured until M. de Voltaire had to come out and allow himself to be gaped at and clapped. I know not which of the two most perplexed me, the childish curiosity of the public or the vain complaisance of the poet. How do people think that a poet looks? Not like other mortals? And how weak must be the impression made by his work if in the end one desires nothing more ardently than to see the face of its maker. The true masterpiece, so it seems to me, fills us so entirely with itself that we forget its author over his work, that we do not regard it as the production of a simple being but as the work of general nature. Young says of the sun that it would have been a sin in the heathens not to pray to it. If there is sense in this hyperbole, it is this; the glory, the majesty of the sun is so great, so imposing, that savage man can be pardoned, nay that it is natural, that he can conceive of no greater glory, no higher majesty of which this is but the reflexion, if he so lose himself in his admiration of the sun as not to consider its Creator. I incline to believe that the real reason why we know so little of the person and the life of Homer is to be sought in the excellence of his poems. We stand astonished before the broad rushing river and do not think of its source in the distant mountains. We do not want to know, we are more content to forget that Homer the schoolmaster in Smyrna, Homer the blind beggar, is the same Homer who so delights us in his works. He leads us among gods and heroes and we must feel great *ennui* in this society if we want to look round and inquire after the porter who has admitted us. The deception must be very

slight, we must feel little nature and much art if we are so curious concerning the artist. So little flattering therefore to a man of genius is the desire of the public to know him by sight. What advantage has he before any chance marmot which the public is just as eager to behold? Yet the vanity of the French poets seems to have been satisfied For when the Parisian pit saw how easily a Voltaire was to be tempted into this trap, how tame and pliant such a man became under doubtful caresses, it often repeated this amusement, and rarely was a new play performed afterwards, whose author was not likewise called out and who came out quite willingly. From Voltaire to Marmontel, and from Marmontel deep down to Cordier, nearly all have stood at this pillory. How many a poor contemptible face must have been among them! At last the farce went so far that the more serious among the nation grew annoyed. Polichinello's happy thought is well known. And recently a young poet had the courage to let the pit call in vain He would not appear. His play was mediocre, but his behaviour the more to be admired and praised. I would rather have aided in abolishing such an abuse by my example, than have occasioned it by ten 'Meropes'

No. 37.

I have said that Voltaire's 'Merope' was instigated by Maffei's. But instigated is perhaps saying too little for it has arisen thence; fable, plan and manner belong to Maffei, without his aid Voltaire would not have written a 'Merope' or certainly a very different one

Therefore to judge the Frenchman's copy correctly we must first become acquainted with the Italian original, and to value the latter's poetical merits we must first of all cast a glance over the historical facts on which he founded his fable.

Maffei himself thus condenses these facts in the preface to his play: "Pausanias relates how after the conquest of Troy the Heraklidæ, *i.e.* the descendants of Hercules, settled in the Peloponnesus, and how the territory of Messina fell by lot to Kresphontes. Kresphontes's wife

was named Merope. Now Kresphontes showed himself too indulgent to his people and he and his sons were murdered by the nobles of his realm, all excepting the youngest, named Æpytus who was being educated at a distance among his mother's relations. This youngest son when he was grown up reconquered the paternal kingdom by the aid of the Arcadians and Dorians and revenged his father's death upon the murderers Apollodorus relates how after Kresphontes and his two sons had been murdered, Polyphontes, likewise a Heraklide, had taken possession of the throne and forced Merope to be his wife and how the third son whom the mother had safely concealed, afterwards killed the tyrant and regained the throne. Hyginus relates that Merope nearly killed her son unwittingly, but that she was hindered in time by an old servant who revealed to her that he whom she deemed the murderer of her son, was her son himself, and that this now recognised son had on the occasion of a sacrifice been enabled to slay Polyphontes. Hyginus however names this son Telephontes and not Æpytus."

It would be astonishing if such a story, containing such peculiar reverses of fortune and recognitions had not been already treated by the ancient tragedians. And was it not? Aristotle in his 'Poetics' mentions a Kresphontes in whom Merope recognises her son just at the moment when she is about to kill his presumed assassin. Plutarch in his second treatise on 'Eating of Flesh' beyond doubt refers to this very play[1] when he recalls the tumult into which the whole theatre is aroused when Merope lifts the axe against her son and the fear that seizes each spectator lest the stroke should fall before the old servant arrives. Aristotle refers to this Kresphontes without the name of an author, but as in Cicero and other classics we find reference to a Kresphontes of Euripides, he can scarcely have meant any other work than this.

Father Tournemine says in the above-named letter:

[1] Assuming this (as we may surely assume with certainty, because it was not usual with the ancient poets, nor permitted, to steal one from another) the passage in Plutarch must be a fragment from Euripides Joshua Barnes has not included it, but another editor of the poet might do so.

"Aristotle, this wise legislator of the stage, has placed the fable of Merope in the first rank of tragic fables (a mis ce sujet au premier rang des sujets tragiques), Euripides treated it, and Aristotle remarks that as often as the 'Kresphontes' of Euripides was represented on the stage of witty Athens, this tragic masterpiece moved, delighted and touched in a most extraordinary way a public greatly spoilt by masterpieces;" pretty phrases, but they do not contain much truth! The father was in error on two points. He confused Aristotle with Plutarch, and he did not rightly understand Aristotle. The first error is a trifle, the second merits the trouble of saying a few words because many have equally misunderstood Aristotle.

The matter lies as follows. Aristotle examines in the 14th chapter of his Poetics by what means fear and pity are aroused. All events, he says, must occur either between friends or enemies, or between indifferent persons. When an enemy kills his enemy neither the attack nor the execution of the deed awaken other pity than that common feeling which is connected in general with pain and destruction The same is true of indifferent persons. Consequently tragical events must occur between friends, a brother must kill, or wish to kill, his brother, a son his father, a mother a son, or a son a mother, or else desire to ill-treat them in a painful way. This may occur with or without intention or knowledge, and since the deed must be either consummated or not, four kinds of events arise which more or less express the intentions of tragedy. The first, when the action is undertaken with the full knowledge of the personages concerned, and towards whom it is to be perpetrated, but not carried out. The second, when it is purposely undertaken and actually carried out. The third, when the deed is undertaken and carried out without the knowledge of its object, and the perpetrator recognises too late the object on whom it is perpetrated. The fourth when the deed, undertaken in ignorance, is not carried out, because the persons involved have recognised each other in time. Of these four classes Aristotle gives the preference to the latter, and since he quotes the action of Merope in 'Kresphontes,' as an example thereof, Tournemine and others have accepted this as if he had

thus declared this fable to be the most perfect kind for tragedy.

While in reality Aristotle says, shortly before, that a good tragical fable must not end happily but unhappily. How can these two statements exist togethei? It is to end happily and yet the events which, in accordance with this classification are preferred to all other tragical events, end happily. Does not the great critic openly contradict himself?

Victorius, says Dacier, was the only person who perceived this difficulty, but since he did not understand what Anstotle really meant in his fourteenth chapter, he did not even try to overcome the difficulty. Aristotle, says Dacier, is not speaking of fable in general, but only wants to teach how the poet should treat tragical events without changing the essential that history relates of them; and which of these kinds is the best. When, for instance, the muider of Klytemnestra by Oiestes is to be the subject of the play, there are according to Aristotle four ways of working this material, either as an occurrence of the first, second, third or fourth class; the poet must only consider which is the best and most suited ' It cannot be that the murder is treated as an event of the first class because accordıng to history it really took place, and must take place through Orestes. Nor according to the second, because this is too hornble. Nor according to the fourth, because thus Klytemnestra would be saved, and she must on no account be saved. Consequently only the third class remains

The third! but Aristotle gives the preference to the fourth and not only in individual cases and according to circumstances, but in general. The worthy Dacier often acts thus, Aristotle remains in the right with him, not because he is in the right, but because he is Aristotle. While thus deeming that he is covering some of his faults he makes him commit far worse ones. Now if an opponent should have the prudence to attack the latter instead of the former, then it is all over with the infallibility of his classical author about which he cares more than about truth. If so much depends on coincidence with history, if the poet may soften but not wholly change well-known

incidents, will there not be some among them that must of necessity be treated according to the first or second class? Klytemnestra's murder ought to be treated according to the second, for Orestes has committed it knowingly and designedly, but the poet may choose the third because it is more tragical and does not totally contradict history. Well, so be it but how about Medea who murders her children? What other plan but the second can the poet pursue here? For she must murder them and murder them designedly, both circumstances are equally historical. Then what order of precedence can there be among these categories? The one that is the most excellent in one case cannot be thought of in another Or to press Dacier yet harder, let us make the application not to historical, but to fictitious events. Granted that the murder of Clytemnestra belonged to the latter category and it had been open to the poet to perpetrate it or not, to perpetrate it with knowledge or without. Which mode would he have had to employ in order to make of it the most perfect tragedy possible? Dacier himself says the fourth, for if he had preferred the third it would only have arisen from regard for history. The fourth therefore? The one therefore which ends happily? But the best tragedies, says Aristotle, who accords preference to this fourth plan, are those which end unhappily? And this is just the contradiction which Dacier sought to remove. Has he removed it? He has rather confirmed it.

No. 38.

Nor am I singular in regarding Dacier's exposition as inadequate. The German translator of Aristotle's 'Poetics' has found it equally unsatisfactory[1] He gives his reasons against it, that do not actually contradict Dacier's evasions but yet seem to him quite sufficient to abandon the defence of his author and attempt a new venture to save something which is not to be saved. "I leave it to a deeper comprehension to remove these difficulties, I can find no light towards their explanation, and it seems to me only probable that our philosopher

[1] Herr Curtius, p. 214.

did not think through this chapter with his wonted care."

I must confess that this seems to me highly improbable. Aristotle is not often guilty of a palpable contradiction. Where I would seem to find one in such a man, I prefer rather to mistrust my own reason. I redouble my attention, I re-read the passage ten times, and do not think that he contradicts himself before I perceive from the entire connexion of his system how and why he has been betrayed into this contradiction. If I find nothing that could so betray him, that must, so to speak, make this contradiction inevitable, then I am convinced that it is only an apparent contradiction. Else it would certainly have occurred first to the author who had to think over his matter so often, and not to me, the unpractised reader who has taken him up for instruction. I therefore pause, retrace the thread of my ideas, ponder every word, and repeat to myself again and again. Aristotle can err and has often erred, but that he should here insist on something which on the next page he contradicts, that Aristotle cannot do. Then at length light will come.

But without further circumlocution, here is the explanation of which Herr Curtius despaired. Nevertheless I make no claim to the honour of a deeper comprehension. I am contented with the honour of evincing more modesty towards a philosopher like Aristotle.

Now Aristotle commends nothing more to the tragic poet than a good conception of his fable, and he has endeavoured to render this easy to him by various and subtle remarks. For it is the fable that principally makes a poet: ten will succeed in representing customs, reflexions, expressions for one who is excellent and blameless in this. He declares a fable to be an imitation of an action, *πράξεως*, and an action by a combination of events is *σύνθεσις πραγμάτων*. The action is the whole, the events are the parts of this whole, and as the goodness of any whole rests on the goodness and connexion of its several parts, so also tragical action is more or less perfect, according as the events of which it is composed separately and collectively coincide with the intentions of the tragedy. Aristotle classes the events that can take place in a tragic

action under three main heads: change of circumstances, *περιπέτεια*; cognition, *ἀναγνωρισμός*; and suffering, *πάθος*. What he means by the two first the names sufficiently reveal. Under the third he comprehends all that can occur of a painful and destructive nature to the acting personages; death, wounds, martyrdom and so forth. Change of circumstances and cognition are that by which the more intricate fable, *μῦθος πεπλεγμένος*, is distinguished from the simple, *ἁπλοῦς* They are therefore no essential part of the fable, they only make the action more varied and hence more interesting and beautiful, but an action can have its full unity, completion and greatness without them. But without the third we can conceive of no tragical action; every tragedy must have some form of suffering, *πάθη*, be its fable simple or involved, for herein lies the actual intention of tragedy, to awaken fear and pity, while not every change of outward circumstances, not every cognition, but only certain forms of these attain this end, and other forms are rather disadvantageous than profitable. While therefore Aristotle regards and examines separately the various parts of tragical action that he has brought under these three main divisions, explaining what are the best outward changes, the best cognition, the best treatment of suffering, he finds in regard to the former that such changes of fortune are the best and most capable of awakening and stimulating pity and fear, which change from better to worse. In regard to the latter division he finds that the best treatment of suffering in the same sense is when the persons whom suffering threatens, do not know each other or only recognise each other at the moment when this suffering is to become reality and it is therefore stayed.

And this is called a contradiction? I do not understand where can be the thoughts of him who finds the least contradiction here. The philosopher speaks of various parts, why must that which he maintains of one of these parts of necessity apply to the others? Is the possible perfection of the one also the perfection of the other? Or is the perfection of a part also the perfection of the whole? If change of circumstances and that which Aristotle includes under the word suffering, are two

different things, as they are indeed, why should not something quite different be said of them? Or is it impossible that a whole should have parts of opposed characteristics? Where does Aristotle say that the best tragedy is nothing but a representation of changes of fortunes from prosperity to adversity? Or where does he say that the best tragedy results from nothing but the recognition of him on whom a fearful and unnatural deed was to have been committed? He says neither one thing nor the other of tragedy generally, but each of these things of an especial part that more or less concerns the end, which may or may not have influence. Change of fortune may occur in the middle of the play, and even if it continues thus to the end of the piece, it does not therefore constitute its end. For example, the change of fortune in 'Œdipus' that evinces itself already at the close of the fourth act, but to which various sufferings, πάθη, are added and with which the play really concludes. In the same manner suffering can attain its accomplishment in the play and at the same moment be thwarted by recognition, so that by means of this recognition the play is far from concluded, as in the second 'Iphigenia' of Euripides where Orestes is already recognised in the fourth act by his sister who was in the act of sacrificing him. And how perfectly such tragical changes of fortune can be combined with tragical treatment of suffering in one and the same fable, can be shown in 'Merope' itself It contains the latter but what hinders it from having the former also, if for instance Merope, when she recognises her son under the dagger in her eagerness to defend him from Polyphontes, contributes to her own or to her loved son's destruction? Why should not this play close as well with the destruction of the mother as with that of the tyrant? Why should it not be open to the poet to raise to the highest point our pity for a tender mother and allow her to be unfortunate through her tenderness? Or why should it not be permissible to let the son whom a pious vengeance has torn from his mother, succumb to the pursuit of the tyrant? Would not such a 'Merope' in both cases combine those two characteristics of the best tragedy, in which the critic has been found so contradictory?

I perceive very well what caused the misunderstanding. It was not easy to imagine a change of fortune from better to worse without suffering, or suffering that has been obviated by recognition otherwise than connected with change of fortune Yet each can equally be without the other, not to mention that both need not touch the same person, and even if it touches the same person, that both may not occur at the same time, but one follows the other, and one can be caused by the other. Without considering this, people have only thought of such instances and fables, in which both parts either harmonise or in which one of necessity excludes the other. That such exist, is unquestionable But is the art critic to be censured because he composes his rules in the most general manner, without considering the cases in which his general rules come into collision and one perfection must be sacrificed to another? Does such a collision of necessity bring him into contradiction with himself? He says This part of the fable, if it is to have its perfection, must be of such and such a constitution, that part of another, a third again of another. But where has he said that every fable must of necessity have all these parts? Enough for him that there are fables that could have them all. If your fable is not among the number of these happy ones, if it only admits of the best changes of fortune, the best treatment of suffering, then examine with which of the two you would succeed best as a whole, and choose. That is all!

No. 39.

Finally Aristotle may or may not have contradicted himself, Tournemine may have understood him rightly or no; the fable of 'Merope' is neither in the one case nor the other to be pronounced at once as a perfect fable. For if Aristotle has contradicted himself, then he maintains just the contrary, and it must first be examined where he is most in the right, here or there But if he has not contradicted himself, in accordance with my explanation, then the good he says of it does not concern the whole fable but only a separate part thereof Perhaps the misuse of his authority by Father Tournemine

was only a Jesuit's trick. to give us to understand that such a perfect fable, treated by such a great poet as Voltaire. must needs be a masterpiece.

But Tournemine and Tournemine! I fear my readers will ask "Who is this Tournemine? We know no such Tournemine!" For many might really not know him and many might ask thus because they know him too well. like Montesquieu.[1]

Let them have the goodness therefore to substitute M de Voltaire for Father Tournemine For he too endeavours to give us the same erroneous impressions of the lost play of Euripides. He too says, that Aristotle in his immortal 'Poetics' does not hesitate to pronounce that the recognition by Merope of her son is the most interesting moment in the whole Greek theatre. He too says that Aristotle accords preference to this *coup de théâtre* before all others And he even assures us of Plutarch, that he held this play of Euripides to be the most touching of all his plays[2] This latter statement is wholly fictitious. For Plutarch does not even name the title of the play whence he quotes the situation of Merope; he neither says how it is called nor who was its author: still less does he declare it to be the most touching of Euripides' dramas.

Aristotle should not have hesitated to pronounce that the recognition by Merope of her son is the most interesting moment in the whole Greek theatre! What an expression! "not hesitated to pronounce." What hyperbole: "the most interesting moment of the whole Greek theatre"! Should we not infer herefrom that Aristotle was carefully reviewing all the interesting moments that a tragedy may have, comparing one with another, weighing the various examples that he found in each

[1] Lettres familières

[2] "Aristote. dans sa Poëtique immortelle, ne balance pas à dire que la reconnaissance de Mérope et de son fils était le moment le plus intéressant de toute la scène Grecque. Il donnait à ce coup de théâtre la préférence sur tous les autres Plutarque dit que les Grecs, ce peuple si sensible, frémissaient de crainte que le vieillard, qui devait arrêter le bras de Mérope, n'arrivât pas assez tôt. Cette pièce, qu'on jouait de son temps, et dont il nous reste très-peu de fragments, lui paraissait la plus touchante de toutes les tragédies d'Euripide," &c — *Lettre à M. Maffei.*

poet, or at least in the most famous, and then pronounced boldly and surely his verdict in favour of this moment of Euripides? And yet it is only one single kind of interesting moment that he cites as an example, and besides it is not even the only example of this kind. Aristotle found similar instances in 'Iphigenia,' where the sister recognises the brother, and in 'Helle' where the son recognises his mother, just as they are about to lift their hands against them

The second example of 'Iphigenia' is truly from Euripides, and if, as Dacier suspects, 'Helle' also was the work of this poet, it would be remarkable that Aristotle should have found all three examples of such a fortunate recognition just in the very poet who most employs the unhappy peripeteia.* And yet, why remarkable? We have seen that one does not exclude the other, and although in 'Iphigenia' a happy recognition follows upon the unhappy peripeteia and the play therefore ends happily, who knows whether in the two others an unhappy peripeteia did not follow a happy recognition and they therefore concluded quite in the manner by which Euripides has gained for himself the character of the most tragic of all tragic poets?

In 'Merope' this was possible in a twofold manner, as I have shown. Whether it really thus occurred or no cannot be conclusively decided out of the few fragments that remain to us of the 'Kresphontes' They contain nothing but moral axioms and reflexions often quoted by later authors and do not throw the smallest light upon the economy of the play.[3] Only from one of these, wherein Polybius appeals to the goddess of Peace, we can infer that the time of action fell before peace had been restored in Messene, and from a few others we may almost conclude that the murder of Kresphontes and his two eldest sons either formed a part of the action or else just preceded it, which does not very well agree with the recognition of the younger son who only came to avenge his father and brothers many years after. But the title

[3] That which Dacier quotes (Poetique d'Aristote, chap xv rem 23) without remembering where he had read it, is in Plutarch in the essay "How to make use of one's enemies"

[* i e Change of circumstances, as denoted on p. 338.]

causes me the greatest difficulty. If this recognition and vengeance of the youngest son formed the main part of the contents, how came the play to be named 'Kresphontes'? Kresphontes was the name of the father; the son according to some was called Æpytus, according to others Telephontes; perhaps because the one was the real the other the assumed name that he bore in foreign lands, in order to be safe from the persecutions of Polyphontes The father must long have been dead when the son reconquers the paternal kingdom. Is it likely that a tragedy should be named after a person who does not occur in it? Corneille and Dacier were able quickly to get over this difficulty by assuming that the son was likewise named Kresphontes,[4] but with what likelihood? or what authority?

If, however, there be truth in a discovery whereupon Maffei flatters himself, then we can know the plot of Kresphontes with fair exactitude He thinks that he has found it in the 184th fable of Hyginus,[5] and he further holds Hyginus's fables in great part as nothing but the arguments of older tragedies, which assumption Reinesius held before him, and consequently recommends newer

[4] Remarque 22 sur le Chapitre xv de la Poet d'Arist : "Une mère, qui va tuer son fils, comme Mérope va tuer Cresphonte," &c.

[5] "Questa scoperta penso io d' aver fatta, nel leggere la Favola 184 d'Igino, la quale a mio credere altra non è, che l'Argomento di quella Tragedia, in cui si rappresenta interamente la condotta di essa Sovviemmi, che al primo gettar gli occhi, ch' io feci già in quell' Autore, mi apparve subito nella mente, altro non essere le più di quelle Favole, che gli Argomenti delle Tragedie antiche. mi accertai di ciò col confrontarne alcune poche con le Tragedie, che ancora abbiamo; ed appunto in questi giorni, venuta a mano l' ultima edizione d' Igino, mi è stato caro di vedere in un passo addotto, come fu anche il Reinesio di tal sentimento Una miniera è però questa di Tragici Argomenti, che se fosse stata nota a' Poeti, non avrebbero penato tanto in rinvenir soggetti a lor fantasia: io la scoprirò loro di buona voglia, perchè rendano col loro ingegno alla nostra età ciò, che dal tempo invidioso le fu rapito. Merita dunque, almeno per questo capo, alquanto più di considerazione quell' Operetta, anche tal qual l' abbiamo, che da gli Eruditi non è stato creduto: e quanto al discordar talvolta dagli altri Scrittori delle favolose Storie, questa avertenza ce ne addita la ragione, non avendole costui narrate secondo la tradizione, ma conforme i Poeti in proprio uso convertendole le avean ridotte."

poets rather to search in this disused quarry for the old tragic fables, than to invent new ones. The advice is not bad and should be followed, and it has been followed by many before Maffei gave it or without knowing that Maffei had given it. Herr Weiss has taken the materials of his Thyestes thence and many more are still waiting there for an intelligent eye. Only it might be not the largest but the very smallest part of Hyginus's work which could thus be made use of. Nor need it on account to be composed of the arguments of old tragedies, it can have flowed directly or indirectly from the same sources to which the tragedians applied. Nay, Hyginus, or whoever made the compilation, seems to have regarded the tragedies as diverted and sullied streams, in that in several places for which we have nothing but the authority of the tragic poets, he separates them distinctly from the older genuine tradition. Thus for example, he first relates the fable of Ino and Antiope according to tradition, and then, in a separate paragraph, according to the treatment of Euripides.

No. 40.

I do not mean to say by this that because the name of Euripides does not head the 184th Fable, it cannot therefore have been deduced from his 'Kresphontes.' Rather I confess that it really has the manner and entanglement of a tragedy, so that, if it was not one, it could easily become one, and one whose plan would far nearer approach to antique simplicity than all the modern 'Meropes.' Judge for yourselves. The story of Hyginus that I have only briefly referred to above, is as follows:—

Kresphontes was king of Messene and had three sons by his wife Merope, when Polyphontes stirred up a revolt against him, in which he and his two eldest sons lost their lives. Polyphontes then took possession of the kingdom and the hand of Merope, who, during the revolt found an opportunity to bring her third son, Telephontes, into the safe keeping of a friend in Ætolia. The older Telephontes became, the more uneasy grew Polyphontes.

He could expect little good from him and therefore promised a great reward to whoever should put him out of the way. Telephontes learnt this and since he now felt himself equal to undertake his revenge, he stole away secretly from Ætolia, went to Messene, came before the tyrant and said that he had murdered Telephontes and therefore demanded the promised reward. Polyphontes received him hospitably and commanded that he should be entertained in his palace until he could question him further. Telephontes was therefore conducted into the guest-chamber where he fell asleep from weariness. Meanwhile the old servant whom mother and son had till now employed to carry their respective messages, came weeping to Merope and announced that Telephontes was absent from Ætolia and that none knew whither he had gone. Merope at once hastens to the guest-chamber, for she is not ignorant whereof the stranger boasts. She is armed with an axe and would certainly have murdered her son in his sleep, if the old man who had followed her in, had not recognised him in time and hindered the mother from such a deed of horror. Now both make common cause, and Merope assumes a calm, forgiving attitude towards her husband. Polyphontes deems all his wishes gratified and desires to show his thankfulness to the gods by a sacrifice. But when they are all assembled round the altar, Telephontes directs the blow with which he pretended to slay the sacrificial beast, towards the king; the tyrant falls and Telephontes succeeds to the possession of his paternal realm.[1]

[1] In the 184th Fable of Hyginus, whence the above tale is extracted events have palpably been interwoven that have not the smallest connexion among themselves It begins with the fate of Pentheus and Agave, and ends with the history of Merope. I cannot comprehend how the editor could let this confusion stand unnoticed, or is it possible that it only exists in the edition I have before me (Joannis Schafferi, Hamburgi, 1674). I leave this examination to those who have the means at hand. Enough that here with me the 184th Fable must end with the words "quam Licoterses excepit" The rest either belongs to a separate fable of which the opening words are lost, or what is more likely belongs to the 137th, so that, both connected, I have thus read the fable of Merope, whether it be the 137th or 184th Fable. It is understood that in the latter the words, "cum qua Polyphontes occiso

In the 16th century two Italian poets, Gio. Bapt. Liviera and Pomponio Torelli, had extracted the matter for their tragedies, 'Kresphontes' and 'Merope,' from this fable of Hyginus, and were thus according to Maffei, treading in the footsteps of Euripides without knowing it. But this conviction notwithstanding, Maffei so little thought of making his work a mere divination on Euripides, in order to let the lost 'Kresphontes' revive in his 'Merope,' that he rather diverged purposely from the main outlines of this assumed Euripidean plan, and only employed in all its bearings the one situation that chiefly touched him therein.

The mother who loves her son so ardently that she desires to avenge herself on his murderer with her own hand, suggested to him to picture maternal tenderness generally and to transfuse his play with this pure and virtuous passion to the exclusion of all other love. What did not therefore coincide with this intention, was changed, and this chiefly regarded the circumstances of Merope's second marriage and her son's foreign education. Merope must not be the wife of Polyphontes, for it seemed to the

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Cresphonte, regnum occupavit" must fall away as a needless repetition, together with the following ejus, which is already superfluous.

"MEROPE.

"Polyphontes, Messeniæ rex, Cresphontem Aristomachi filium cum interfecisset, ejus imperium et Meropem uxorem possedit. Filium autem infantem Merope mater quem ex Cresphonte habebat, abscondite ad hospitem in Ætoliam mandavit. Hunc Polyphontes maxima cum industria quærebat, aurumque pollicebatur, si quis eum necasset. Qui postquam ad puberem ætatem venit, capit consilium, ut exequatur patris et fratrum mortem. Itaque venit ad regem Polyphontem, aurum petitum, dicens se Cresphontis interfecisse filium et Meropis, Telephontem. Interim rex eum jussit in hospitio manere, ut amplius de eo perquireret. Qui cum per lassitudinem obdormisset, senex qui inter matrem et filium internuncius erat, flens ad Meropem venit, negans eum apud hospitem esse, nec comparere. Merope credens eum esse filii sui interfectorem, qui dormiebat, in Chalcidicum cum securi venit, inscia ut filium suum interficeret, quem senex cognovit, et matrem a scelere retraxit. Merope postquam invenit occasionem sibi datam esse, ab inimico se ulciscendi, redit cum Polyphonte in gratiam. Rex lætus cum rem divinam faceret, hospes falso simulavit se hostiam percussisse, eumque interfecit, patriumque regnum adeptus est."

poet at variance with the conscientiousness of a pious mother, to abandon herself to the embraces of a second husband in whom she recognised the murderer of her first, and whose very existence demanded that he should free himself of all those who had any nearer claims to the throne. The son must not be brought up in safety and comfort under the roof of a noble friend of the paternal house, in the full knowledge of his rank and future destiny, for maternal love would grow cold if it were not irritated and developed by incessant pictures of discomfort *and ever new dangers that threaten its absent object.* Nor must the son arrive with the definite purpose of killing the tyrant, he must not be deemed by Merope the murderer of her son, because he gives himself out as himself, but because a certain connexion of chances has thrown suspicion upon him; for if he knows his mother then her confusion is over after the first verbal explanation, and her touching sorrow, her tender despair, has not play enough.

In accordance with these changes it is easy to imagine Maffei's plan; Polyphontes has been reigning for fifteen years and yet he does not feel the throne a sure one. For the people are still attached to the house of the former king and reckon upon the last branch thereof. To assuage the discontented, it occurs to him to marry Merope. He offers her his hand under the plea of real love. But Merope scorns this plea and he then endeavours to attain by threats and violence what his persuasions could not compass. He is just urging her imperatively when a youth is brought before him who has been taken upon the high road connected with a murder. Ægisthus, so the youth is named, has done nothing but defend his own life against a robber, his aspect betrays so much nobility and innocence, his speech so much truth, that Merope, who besides recognises a certain line of the mouth that was peculiar to her husband, is induced to beg the king for his life and the king grants it. Immediately after Merope misses her youngest son, whom she has confided to an old servant, Polydorus, after her husband's death, with the command to educate him as his own son. He has secretly left the old man whom he deems his father, to see the

world and can be found nowhere. The mother's heart fears the worst, some one has been murdered on the high road, how if this was her son? Her fears are strengthened by various circumstances, the king's willingness to pardon the murderer, also by the sight of a ring that is found on Ægisthus and which she is told Ægisthus took from the murdered man This is her husband's signet ring which she had confided to Polydorus to give to her son when he should have reached man's estate and it should be time to reveal his rank to him. She at once causes the youth, whose life she had implored, to be bound to a column, and intends to pierce his heart with her own hand At this moment the youth remembers his parents, he utters the name Messene and recalls his father's caution to avoid this spot Merope demands an explanation of this, meantime the king comes up and the youth is liberated So near as Merope was to the recognition of her error, so deeply she falls back into it, when she sees how maliciously the king triumphs in her despair. Ægisthus must inevitably be her son's murderer and nothing shall save him from her vengeance. At nightfall she hears that he is sleeping in an ante-room and goes in with an axe to sever his head and has already raised the axe for the fatal blow, when Polydorus, who has shortly before entered the ante-room and recognised the sleeping Ægisthus, stays her arm. Ægisthus awakes and flies, and Polydorus reveals to Merope her own son in the person of his supposed murderer. She wishes to follow him and would inevitably have revealed his identity to the tyrant by her wild tenderness, had not the old man restrained her. Early next day her marriage with the tyrant was to take place, she must go to the altar, but she would die sooner than give her consent. Meantime Polydorus has made himself known to Ægisthus, Ægisthus hurries to the temple, forces his way through the crowd and the rest is told by Hyginus.

No. 41.

The worse matters looked generally with the Italian theatre at the beginning of this century, the greater was

the applause and delight wherewith Maffei and Merope were greeted.

"Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii,
Nescio quid majus nascitur Œdipode,"

cried Leonardo Adami, who had only seen the first two acts in Rome. In Venice during the carnival of 1714 scarcely another play but 'Merope' was acted; the whole world wanted to see the new tragedy again and again, and even the Opera was neglected for it. It was printed four times in one year, and in sixteen years (1714 to 1730) more than thirty editions have been issued in and out of Italy, in Vienna, Paris, London. It has been translated into French, English, and German and it was intended to print it with all these translations. It had been twice translated into French, when M. de Voltaire took possession of it again to bring it upon the French stage. But he soon found that this could not be by means of a real translation, and he gave his reasons for this at length in a letter to the Marquis afterwards printed as a preface to his own 'Merope.'

"The tone," he says, "of the Italian 'Merope' is too *naïve* and *bourgeois* and the taste of the French parterre too delicate and refined for plain simple nature to please them. It would not see nature except under certain disguises of art and these disguises must be far other at Paris than in Verona." The whole letter is written with extreme politeness, Maffei has erred in nowise, all his carelessness and faults are put to the account of the national taste, they are even beauties, but alas! only beauties for Italy. Indeed it is not possible to criticise more politely. But this tiresome politeness! Even a Frenchman soon finds it burdensome if his vanity suffers thereby in the very least. Politeness makes us appear amiable but not great, and the Frenchman desires to appear great as well as amiable.

But what follows upon the elegant dedication of M. de Voltaire? The writing of a certain De la Lindelle, who says as many rude things about the good Maffei as Voltaire has said polite. The style of this De la Lindelle is about the style of Voltaire; it is a pity that so good a

writer has not written more and is so generally unknown. But whether Lindelle is Voltaire or really Lindelle; whoever would see a French Janus-head that laughs in front in the most flattering mode and makes the most malicious grimaces behind, let him read both letters at one time. I should not like to have written either, least of all both. Voltaire remains this side the truth from politeness, while Lindelle ranges far beyond it on the other side from desire to depreciate. One should have been more candid, the other more just, if the suspicion was not to be aroused that the same author desired to take back under a strange name all that he had conceded in his own.

Voltaire may reckon it as much as he pleases to the credit of the Marquis that he was one of the first among Italians who had courage and strength enough to write a tragedy without gallantry, in which the whole intrigue rests on the love of a mother and the tenderest interest springs from pure virtue He may lament that the false delicacy of his nation does not permit him to make use of the easy natural means offered by the circumstances towards the *dénouement*, and of the true unstudied speeches which the matter itself suggests The Parisian parterre is unquestionably much in the wrong in that it will not hear of any ring upon the stage since Boileau mocked at the royal ring in his Satires.[1] It is wrong in forcing its poet rather to have recourse to every other, even the most awkward means of recognition, than to employ a ring, with which all the world, since all time has connected a kind of recognition, a kind of assurance of personality. It is wrong in not suffering a young man who deems himself the son of common parents, who is wandering about alone in search of adventures, not to be held to be a robber, after he has committed a murder, because it foresees that he must become the hero of the play, and in being offended that such a man should not be presumed capable of possessing a valuable ring, when there is no lieutenant in the king's army who does not

[1] "Je n'ai pu me servir comme M. Maffei d'un anneau, parce que depuis l'anneau royal dont Boileau se moque dans ses satyres, cela sembleroit trop petit sur notre théâtre."

own *de belles Nippes.*[2] The Parisian parterre, say I, is wrong in this and similar cases; but why must Voltaire, even in other cases where it certainly is not wrong, rather prefer to make it seem wrong sooner than Maffei? If French politeness towards strangers consists in making them seem right even where they should be corrected, then I do not know what is more offensive and unbecoming a free man, than this French politeness. The gossip which Maffei puts into the mouth of old Polydorus about merry weddings, and gorgeous coronations that he has seen at a moment when our interest is at its height and the imagination of the spectators is busy with quite other things; its Nestorian, but misplaced Nestorian gossip, cannot be excused by any difference of taste between different cultivated peoples. In this, taste must everywhere be the same, and the Italian has not his own taste, but simply none, if he does not yawn and get as impatient as the Frenchman. "You have been allowed," says Voltaire to the Marquis, "to translate and employ in your tragedy that beautiful and touching comparison of Virgil's—

"'Qualis populea mœrens Philomela sub umbra
Amissos queritur fœtus . . .'

If I should take such a liberty I should be referred with it to the epopee. For you cannot think how severe the master is whom we must strive to please; I mean our public. They demand that in a tragedy the hero should speak everywhere and the poet nowhere, and contend that at critical junctures in assemblies, at violent scenes, at a threatening danger, no king, no minister would make poetical comparisons." Now does such a public demand anything unfair? Does it not contend the truth? Should not every public demand this? contend this? A public that judges otherwise does not merit the name, and must Voltaire make the whole Italian public such a public, just because he has not candour enough to say straight

[2] "Je n'oserais hasarder de faire prendre un héros pour un voleur, quoique la circonstance où il se trouve autorise cette méprise.

out to the poet, that here and in several places he has gone astray and poked his own head through the curtain?

And leaving out of regard that detailed comparisons scarcely find a fit place in a tragedy, he should have noticed that Virgil's was greatly abused by Maffei. In Virgil it increases our pity, and that is its purpose, but Maffei puts it into the mouth of him who rejoices over the misfortune of which it is a picture, and to be in accordance with Polyphontes's mood it ought to arouse more scorn than pity. But Voltaire does not hesitate to lay even greater faults that exert influence over the whole play, to the charge of the Italian taste, rather than to the charge of one poet among them. Voltaire thinks that he displays the greatest *savoir vivre* when he consoles Maffei by saying that the whole nation comprehends this no better than he does; that his faults are the faults of his nation, but that the faults of a whole nation really were no faults, since it did not matter what was good or bad in itself but what a whole nation deemed good or bad "How could I have ventured," he continues, making a deep bow to the Marquis and sneering at him in secret, "how could I have ventured to let minor characters speak so often one with another as you have done! They serve with you to prepare for the interesting scenes between the chief characters, they are the entrances to a beautiful palace, but our impatient public desires to find itself instantly inside this palace. We must fain submit to the taste of a people which has become satiated with masterpieces and hence is spoilt." What does this mean else but "M le Marquis, your play contains very very many cold, tedious and useless scenes. But far be it from me to reproach you with these! Heaven forfend! I am a Frenchman, I have *savoir vivre*, I should not force something unpleasant upon you. Beyond doubt you wrote these cold, tedious useless scenes advisedly and with all care, because they are just what your nation needs. I wish that I too could get off as cheaply, but alas! my nation is so far, so very far ahead that I must be yet farther to satisfy them I will not on that account think more of myself than of you, but since my nation does so

far over-top yours——" Further I do not venture to extend my paraphrase, for else—

"Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne:"

politeness might become *persiflage* (I use this French word because we Germans know nothing of the matter), and *persiflage* stupid pride.

No. 42.

It is not to be denied that a goodly portion of the faults which as idiosyncrasies of Italian taste Voltaire only seems to excuse in his precursor in order to charge them upon the whole Italian nation, these faults I say do exist in the 'Merope' of Maffei, as well as other and far greater ones. In his youth Maffei had much leaning towards poetry, he versified with ease in all the various styles of the famous poets of his country, but this inclination and this facility prove little or nothing in favour of the peculiar genius that is required for tragedy. Afterwards he devoted himself to history, criticism and archæology, and I question whether these studies are the fittest nourishment for a tragic genius. He was buried among Church fathers and ecclesiastical documents and wrote against the priests and Basnage, when, incited by social circumstances, he took up his 'Merope' and finished it in less than two months. If such a man, amidst such occupations could make a masterpiece in so short a time, he must have had the most extraordinary head or else a tragedy is a very slight affair. That however which a scholar of good classical taste, who looks upon the matter rather as a recreation than a labour worthy of him, could produce, that he did produce. His treatment is more mannered and artificial than felicitous, his characters are more in accordance with the analysis of moralists, or after well-known types in books, than drawn from life, his expressions evince more imagination than feeling; the *littérateur* and the versifier are everywhere discernible, but rarely the poet and the genius.

As a versifier he hunts greatly after descriptions and metaphors. He has some most excellent ones, true pic-

tures, that cannot be enough admired if spoken by himself, but which are quite unendurable spoken by his personages, and even result in utter absurdities. Thus for example it is very proper that Ægisthus should describe minutely his struggle with the robber whom he murders, for on this rests his defence; but that when he confesses to have thrown the corpse into the river, he should paint the minutest phenomena that accompany the fall of a heavy body into water, how it shoots down, with what sound the waters divide, how it splashes up into the air, and how the floods close up again,[1] this would not be forgiven even to a cold garrulous lawyer who defends him, much less to himself. Whoever stands before a judge to defend his life has far other things near his heart than to be so childishly accurate in his narrative.

As a literary man Maffei has shown too much reverence for the simplicity of old Greek habits and costumes, such as we find them depicted in Homer and Euripides This latter must be, I will not say ennobled, but brought nearer to our costume if it is not to detract from the pathos of tragedy. Also he has too evidently endeavoured to imitate fine passages from the ancients, without distinguishing from what kind of works he borrows them and into what kind of work he is transporting them. Nestor in the epic is a friendly garrulous old man, but Polydorus in the tragedy who is fashioned after him is a detestable old chatterer. If Maffei had really followed the supposed plan of Euripides, then the literary man would certainly have made us laugh. He would have held it to be his duty to use all the little fragments preserved of 'Kres-

[1] Atto I. sc 3:—

"... in core
Però mi venne di lanciar nel fiume
Il morto, o semivivo, e con fatica
(Ch' inutil' era per riuscire, e vana)
L' alzai da terra, e in terra rimaneva
Una pozza di sangue: a mezzo il ponte
Portailo in fretta, di vermiglia striscia
Sempre rigando il suol, quinci cadere
Col capo in giù il lasciai piombò, e gran tonfo
S' udì nel profondarsi in alto salse
Lo spruzzo, e l' onda sopra lui si chiuse."

phontes' and to work them neatly into his play.[2] Wherever he thought they fitted he would have put them up as posts round which his dialogue must twine. What pedantic tyranny! And to what end? If it is not these moral axioms with which space is filled up, well then it is others.

Yet notwithstanding this, there are passages where we might wish that the literary man had forgotten himself less. For instance: after the recognition and Merope's discovery that she has twice been in danger of murdering her own son, he makes Ismene exclaim with astonishment: "What a wonderful event, more wonderful than was ever conceived of on a stage!"

> "Con così strani avvennimenti uom forse
> Non vide mai favoleggiar le scene."

Maffei did not recollect that his play was laid at a time when theatres were yet unknown; in the time before Homer, whose poem scattered the first seeds of the drama. I would not have laid stress on this heedlessness to any person but to him who held it needful to excuse himself in the preface, for employing the name Messene at a time when beyond doubt no town of this name existed, since Homer does not mention it. A poet can treat such trifles as he likes, we only demand that he should be consistent and that he should not in one instance have scruples which in another he boldly disregards, unless we are to believe that the omission has arisen from ignorance rather than from designed disregard. Altogether the lines quoted would not please me, even if they did not contain an anachronism. The tragedian should avoid everything that can remind the audience of their illusion, for as soon as they are reminded thereof the illusion is gone. It almost seems here as though Maffei sought to strengthen this illusion by assuming the idea of a theatre outside the theatre, but the mere words "stage" and "invention"

[2] "Non essendo dunque stato mio pensiere di seguir la Tragedia d' Euripide, non ho cercato per consequenza di porre nella mia que, sentimenti di essa, che son rimasti quà e là; avendone tradotti cinque versi Cicerone, e recati tre passi Plutarco, e due versi Gellio, ed alcuni trovandosene ancora, se la memoria non m' inganna, presso Stobeo."

are so prejudicial to the matter that they carry us straight thither whence he would divert us. It is sooner permitted to the comic poet thus to place representation in apposition to representation, for to rouse our laughter does not require the same degree of illusion as to arouse our pity.

I have said already how severe De la Lindelle is upon Maffei According to him Maffei has been content with what his material offered without bringing the smallest art to bear on it, his dialogue is without reality, dignity or grace, the play is full of petty contemptible matter that would scarcely be tolerated in a harlequinade; it overflows with absurdities and schoolboy faults. "In one word," he concludes, "Maffei's work contains a fine subject, but is a wretched play. Every one in Paris is agreed that it would not have been possible to sit out its representation, and even in Italy sensible people make small account of it. In vain has the author on his various journeys, lured the most miserable writers to translate his tragedy, he could pay a translator more easily than improve his piece."

As there are rarely compliments without some lies, so there are rarely rude speeches without some truth. Lindelle is right in several points, and he might be rude or polite, so long as he was content merely to find fault with Maffei. But he desires to tread him under foot, to annihilate him, and sets to work blindly and perfidiously. He is not ashamed to tell downright lies, to commit palpable forgeries, in order to be able to raise most malicious laughter of contempt. Among three blows that he hits, one always goes into the air, and of the other two that should hit or graze his adversary, one infallibly hits Voltaire also, for whose sake all this boxing match is undertaken. Voltaire seems to have felt this in part, and is therefore not slow in his answer to Lindelle, to defend Maffei in all those points in which he thinks he must also defend himself. This whole correspondence with oneself lacks, it seems to me, its most interesting part, Maffei's reply. If only M. de Voltaire would also communicate this to us! Or was it perhaps not of the nature he had hoped to provoke by his flatteries? Did Maffei perhaps take the liberty to place before him in return the peculiarities of

the French taste? did he venture to show him why the French 'Merope' could please as little in Italy, as the Italian in France?

No. 43.

Something of the kind might be surmised. But I will rather prove what I have said myself than surmise what others may have said.

To begin with, Lindelle's blame may be mitigated in almost every point If Maffei has erred he has not always erred so grossly as Lindelle would have us believe. For instance he says that Ægisthus exclaims, "Oh, my old father!" when Merope is about to smite him, and that the queen is so touched by these words, "old father," that she abandons her purpose and conceives the notion that Ægisthus might be her son. Is not this, he adds maliciously, a well-founded conception? For certainly it is something quite remarkable that a young man should have an old father! "Maffei," he continues, "sought to amend by this fault, this lack of art and genius, another fault that he had committed in the first edition of his play. In this Ægisthus exclaimed: 'Oh, Polydorus, my father!' And this Polydorus was the very man to whom Merope had confided her son. At the name Polydorus the queen could no longer doubt that Ægisthus is her son, and the play would have been at an end. Now the fault is certainly removed, but its place has been occupied by a more gross one." It is true, in the first edition Ægisthus calls Polydorus his father: but in the following editions there is no mention of a father. The queen only starts at the name of Polydorus who warned Ægisthus not to set foot in the realms of Messene. She does not on that account abandon her design, she only demands an explanation, and before she has obtained this the king appears. The king causes Ægisthus to be released, and since he lauds and approves the deed for which Ægisthus has been condemned, and promises to reward it as an heroic deed, Merope is obliged to fall back upon her former suspicion. Can he be her son whom Polyphontes seeks to reward for murdering this son? This conclusion must needs weigh more with her than a mere name?

She now regrets that for a mere name's sake, a name many might bear, she hesitated in consummating her vengeance

"Che dubitar! misera, ed io da un nome
Triattener mi lasciai, quasi un tal nome
Altri aver non potesse——"

The subsequent utterances of the tyrant can only confirm her in her belief that he has the most certain and exact intelligence concerning the death of her son. Now is all this so very absurd? It does not seem so to me. I must rather admit that I do not even think Maffei's amendment was so needful. Let Ægisthus say that his father is named Polydorus. It does not make much difference whether it be his father or his friend who warns him against Messene. Enough that, failing contradiction, Merope must hold what the tyrant thinks of Ægisthus as more probable, since she knows that he has long and ardently pursued her son, than what she can infer from a mere coincidence of name Certainly, if she knew that the tyrant's idea that Ægisthus is the murderer of her son is founded on nothing save her own suspicion, that would alter the matter. But she does not know this, and further she has every reason to believe that the tyrant is sure of his ground It must be understood that I do not pronounce everything beautiful that can at need be excused, unquestionably the poet might have arranged his plot with more art I only wish to say that even so as he has made it, Merope does not act without sufficient cause, and that it is very likely and possible that Merope will continue to harbour designs of vengeance which she will seek to execute at the first opportunity granted. That which would offend me therefore is not that she comes a second time to murder her son as the murderer of her son; but that she is bewildered a second time through a lucky chance event. I would pardon the poet if he did not let Merope decide according to the laws of the greater probability, for the passions that are awakened in her might turn the balance in favour of the weakest reasons. But I cannot pardon him for taking such liberties with accident and being so prodigal of wonderful

chance events as though they were the commonest events. That chance may once lend pious aid to a mother, may be; we will believe it the more willingly that the surprise pleases us. But that the same hastiness is checked a second time in the same way, this is not like chance; the surprise repeated ceases to be a surprise, its monotony offends and we are vexed with the poet who knows how to be as marvellous but not as varied, as chance.

Of Lindelle's most conspicuous and designed falsifications I will only instance two. He says: "The fourth act begins with a cold and needless scene between the tyrant and Merope's confidante; hereupon the confidante meets, I know not how, the young Ægisthus, and persuades him to repose in the atrium, in order that when he has fallen asleep the queen may murder him with all ease. He does indeed go to sleep, as he had promised, very well; then comes the queen, axe in hand, to murder the young man, who expressly sleeps for this purpose. This same *situation*, twice repeated, betrays the extremest poverty of idea, and the sleep of this young man is so absurd that nothing in the world can be more ludicrous." But is it true that the confidante persuades him into this sleep? This is an untruth on Lindelle's part.[1] Ægisthus meets the confidante and begs her to reveal to him why the queen is so angered against him. The confidante replies, she would gladly tell him all, but important business calls her elsewhere, he is to wait here a moment, she will come back directly. The confidante certainly intends to deliver him up into the hands of the queen, she persuades him to remain but not to sleep, and Ægisthus, who remains in accordance with his promise, falls asleep, not in accordance with his promise but because he is tired,

[1] And M. de Voltaire's also For not only Lindelle says: "Ensuite cette suivante rencontre le jeune Égiste, je ne sais comment, et lui persuade de se reposer dans le vestibule, afin que, quand il sera endormi, la reine puisse le tuer tout à son aise.' but M. de Voltaire himself says. "la confidante de Mérope engage le jeune Égiste à dormir sur la scène, afin de donner le temps à la reine de venir l'y assassiner." What is to be inferred from this unanimity I need not remark. It is rare for a liar to agree with himself, and if two liars agree it must be a prearranged concern.

because it is right and because he does not see where else he should spend the night.[2] Lindelle's second lie is of the same kind He says. "Merope after she has been hindered by old Polydorus from murdering her son, asks him what reward he requires for his services, and the old fool begs her to rejuvenate him." Begs her to rejuvenate him? "The reward of my services," says the old man "is to see you happy. What could you give me? I need nothing, I ask nothing.[3] One thing I might wish, but that is neither in your power nor that of any mortal, to grant, that the weight of years under which I groan be lightened," &c. Does that mean, "lighten thou the load? give thou me back my strength and youth?" I do not say that these complaints about the discomforts of age are in their most appropriate place here, although they are quite in keeping with the character of Polydorus. But is every awkwardness a madness? And would not Polydorus and his poet be mad in the truest sense if the latter really placed this petition in the mouth of the former, as Lindelle falsely asserts? Falsely asserts! Lies! Do such trifles merit such hard words? Trifles? What Lindelle held important enough to lie

[2] Atto IV. sc. 2.

EGI Mà di tanto furor · di tanto affanno
Qual' ebbe mai cagion? . .
ISM Il tutto
Scoprirti io non ricuso. mà egli è d' uopo
Che qui t' arresti per brev' ora: urgente
Cura or mi chiama altrove.
EGI Io volontieri
T' attendo quanto vuoi ISM Mà non partire
E non far sì, ch' io quà ritorni indarno.
EGI. Mia fè dò in pegno; e dove gir dovrei?—

[3] Atto IV. sc. 7.

MER. Ma quale, ô mio fedel, qual potrò io
Darti già mai mercè, che i merti agguagli?
POL. Il mio stesso servir fu premio; ed ora
M'è, il vederti contenta, ampia mercede
Che vuoi tu darmi? io nulla bramo. caro
Sol mi saria ciò, ch' altri dar non puote;
Che scemato mi fosse il grave incarco
Degli anni, che mi stà sù 'l capo, e à terra
Il curva, e preme sì, che parmi un monte—

about, should that not be important enough to justify a third person in telling him that he has lied?

No. 44.

I now come to Lindelle's blame which touches Voltaire as well as Maffei for whom it was alone intended.

I pass over the two points where Voltaire himself felt that the missile recoiled on him. Lindelle had said that the signs were weak and ignoble from which Maffei's Merope concluded that Ægisthus was the murderer of her son. Voltaire replied: "I cannot deny to you that I think Maffei has acted more artfully than I, in letting Merope believe that her son is the murderer of her son. He could employ a ring for this purpose and that I might not, for since the royal ring at which Boileau mocks in his 'Satires' that would seem very petty on our stage." But why need Voltaire choose old armour instead of a ring? When Herbas took away the child, what could have induced him to take the armour of the murdered king as well? In order that Ægisthus when grown up need not buy new armour but could use his father's old suit? The prudent old man! Did he not take a few old dresses of the mother's as well? Or did he do it that Ægisthus might some day be known by the armour? Such a suit of armour was probably unique? It was probably a suit of family armour that Vulcan himself had made for the great-grandfather. An impenetrable suit of armour? Or perchance embellished with beautiful figures and symbols at whose aspect Eurykles and Merope would recognise it after fifteen years? If this be so, then the old man certainly had to take it, and M. de Voltaire has cause to be grateful to him that, among the bloody confusion when another would only have thought of the child, he also thought of so useful a commodity. For if Ægisthus had to lose his father's kingdom, he need not lose his father's armour in which he might reconquer it. Secondly Lindelle has commented upon Maffei's Polyphontes who insists on wedding Merope. As if Voltaire's did not insist on this too! Voltaire therefore replies to him: "Neither Maffei nor I have made the reasons urgent enough why Polyphontes insists

on having Merope as his spouse. It is perhaps a fault in the subject, but I acknowledge to you that I hold this fault very small if the interest it awakens be considerable." No, the fault is not in the subject. For in this respect Maffei changed the subject. Why need Voltaire have adopted this change if he did not see his advantage therein?

There are several points which Voltaire might have applied to himself; but what father sees all the faults of his child? The stranger who perceives them all at once, need not therefore be more observant than the father; sufficient that he is not the father. Let us assume that I am this stranger!

Lindelle objects in Maffei that he often leaves his scenes disconnected, the stage empty, that his personages often enter and exeunt without cause! all radical faults which we do not pardon nowadays in the most wretched poet. Radical faults these? But this is the French critic's mode of speaking, and I must allow him this if I do not want to begin with him from the very beginning. But radical or not as they may be, must we believe Lindelle's assertion that such are so rare among the poets of his nation? It is true it is they who boast of most obedience to rules, but it is they also who give to these rules such extension that it scarce repays the labour to bring them forward as rules; or else regard them in such a left-handed and forced manner, that it generally offends more to see them observed thus instead of not at all.[1] Voltaire especially is a master in the art of making the

[1] This was in part also Schlegel's verdict "To tell the truth," he said, in his 'Thoughts for the Institution of a Danish Theatre,' "the English who boast of no unity of place, generally observe this better than the French, who give themselves many airs about following the rules of Aristotle so closely. Now it matters least that the picture of the scenes remains unaltered But if there is no reason why the acting personages should be at one place instead of having stayed at another where they were before, if one person acts as master and inmate of a room in which shortly before another person acted as if he were master of the house, talking with all ease with himself or a confidante without this circumstance being excused on the score of probability; in short if the persons only come into this garden or room in order to enter on the stage, then the author of the

chains of rule so easy that he retains full freedom to move about as he likes; and yet he often moves so awkwardly and heavily and makes such vexatious gyrations that we might almost believe every one of his limbs was fastened to a different block. It costs me some self-sacrifice to regard a work of genius from this point of view; but as it is still so fashionable among the commoner class of art critics to regard it from scarcely any other; as it is that about which the admirers of the French theatre make the most noise, I will look at it more closely before I join their outcries.

I. The scene is at Messene in the palace of Merope. This to begin with is not the stern unity of place, which in accordance with the rules and examples of the ancients, a Hedelin deemed he could demand. The scene must not be the whole palace, but only a portion of the palace, which the eye can overlook from one and the same point of view. Whether it be a whole palace, a whole town, or a whole province it is thus the same impossibility. But Corneille already gave extension to this rule, of which in any case there is no express mention among the ancients, and decreed that a single town was sufficient for unity of place. If he wished to justify his best pieces from this point of view, he was obliged to relent so far. What was permitted to Corneille was right for Voltaire. I therefore do not object that the scene must be imagined now in the room of the queen, now in this chamber, now in that atrium, now on this side, now on that. Only in these changes he should have taken the precaution that Corneille recommended; they must not be employed in the same act, still less in the same scene. The place where the act opens must remain through the act, and to change it in one scene or to enlarge or

play would have done better to place the words 'the scene of action is the theatre' upon his playbill, instead of 'the scene is a room in the house of Climenes'; or, to speak more seriously, it would have been far better if the author had followed the custom of the English to change the scene from one house into another, and thus allow his spectators to follow his hero, instead of giving the hero the trouble to go to a place where he has nothing to do in order to please the spectators."

contract it, is the greatest absurdity conceivable. The third act of 'Merope' may occur out of doors, under a corridor, in a saloon, in whose depths the monument of Kresphontes is seen, at which the Queen intends to slay Ægisthus with her own hand; but what can be imagined more paltry than that, in the middle of the fourth scene when Eurykles leads off Ægisthus, he must close this background behind him. How does he close it? Does a curtain fall over it? If ever what Hedelin says of such curtains applied at all, it must apply to this one[2] particularly if we also weigh the reasons why Ægisthus is led away so suddenly, why he must be instantaneously taken out of sight by means of this machinery whereof later on. Just such a curtain is raised in the fifth act. The first six scenes are laid in a hall in the palace and with the seventh we suddenly have an open view into the temple, in order that we may see a dead body in a bloody robe. By what miracle this? And was the sight worth the miracle? We may think that the doors of this temple are suddenly opened, that Merope rushes out with the whole people, and that we thus attain a look into it. I understand, this temple was her widowed majesty's private chapel that abutted on the hall and was in communication with it, in order that her gracious highness might always go dry-footed to her devotions. Only then we ought not only to see them go out that way, but also see them enter; at least we ought to see Ægisthus do so, who at the end of the fourth scene is obliged to run and must be sure to take the shortest road if eight lines farther on he is already to have accomplished his deed.

No 45.

II. Nor has M. de Voltaire made matters less easy to himself in regard to the rules of unity of time. If we consider all the events occurring in his 'Merope,' as occur-

[2] "On met des rideaux qui se tirent et retirent, pour faire que les acteurs paroissent et disparoissent selon la nécessité du sujet—ces rideaux ne sont bons qu'à faire des couvertures pour berner ceux qui les ont inventés, et ceux qui les approuvent"—Pratique du Théâtre, liv. ii chap. 6.

ring on one day, what a number of absurdities we must conceive. Let us assume a full, natural day, let us even accord to it thirty hours, the limit to which Corneille deemed it might be extended. It is true, I see no physical hindrances why all the events could not have occurred in this space of time, but I see the more moral obstacles It is certainly not impossible that a woman should be wooed and married within twelve hours, especially if we drag her by main force before the priests. But if it occurs do we not require the most cogent and urgent reasons for such forcible speed? And then if not even a shadow of such reasons exist, how is that which is only possible by physical means to appear probable to us? The state desires to choose a king; Polyphontes and the absent Ægisthus can alone come into consideration, in order to nullify the claims of Ægisthus Polyphontes seeks to marry his mother; on the very day of the election he sues for her, she refuses him, the election proceeds and results in his favour, Polyphontes is now king and we should suppose that Ægisthus might now appear whenever he willed, the newly elected king would tolerate him awhile. Nothing of the sort; he insists on the marriage, insists it should take place that very day, the very day on which he has first offered his hand to Merope, the very day on which the people have elected him king. Such an old soldier and so fiery a wooer! But his wooing is nothing save diplomacy. The worse therefore to treat so harshly those whom he would entangle in his interests. Merope refused his hand when he was not yet king, when she was forced to believe that he principally sought her hand to help him upon the throne, but now he is king and has become so without founding his claim on the score of being her husband; he may renew his suit, perhaps she may yield, he should leave her time to forget the social rank that once divided them, to accustom her to look on him as her like, perchance it only needs a *short time for this.* If he cannot win her, what boots it him to force her? Will it remain a secret to her adherents that he forced her? Will they not think they will have to hate him also for this? Will they not therefore join themselves to Ægisthus whenever

he appears and regard themselves bound to fight in his cause the cause of his mother? In vain that fate which has been so dilatory the past fifteen years, now delivers Ægisthus into the tyrant's hands and offers him a means whereby he can possess the throne free from other claims, a means far shorter and more infallible than the marriage with the mother. He will and must be married, and married to-day, this very evening, the new king will claim the old queen to-night or he is not satisfied. Is anything more comic conceivable! In the representation I mean, for that a man with only a spark of sense could act thus, is obviously out of the question. What good does it do the poet, that the particular actions that occur in every act would not require much more time for their real occurrence than is occupied by the representation of each act; and that this time, including what is absorbed between the acts, would not nearly require a complete revolution of the sun, has he therefore regarded the unity of time? He has fulfilled the words of the rule, but not their spirit For what he lets happen in one day, can be done in one day it is true, but no sane mortal would do it in one day. Physical unity of time is not sufficient, the moral unity must also be considered, whose neglect is felt by every one, while the neglect of the other, though it generally involves an impossibility, is yet not so generally offensive because this impossibility can remain unknown to many. If, for instance, in a play a person must travel from one place to another and this journey alone would require more than a day, the fault is only observed by those who know the distance of the locality. Not everybody knows geographical distances, while everybody can feel in themselves for what actions they would allow themselves one day, for what several. The poet therefore who does not know how to preserve physical unity of time except at the expense of moral unity, who does not hesitate to sacrifice the one to the other, consults his own interests badly and sacrifices the essential to the accidental. Maffei at least, takes a night to his aid, and the marriage which Polyphontes suggests to-day is solemnised to-morrow. With him too it is not the day on which Polyphontes ascends the throne,

hence circumstances press less closely, they hurry but they do not overhurry themselves. Voltaire's Polyphontes is an ephemeron of a king, who does not deserve to reign a second day, because he began so stupidly and badly on the first.

III. Lindelle says that Maffei often does not connect the scenes and leaves the theatre empty; a fault that nowadays would not be pardoned to the meanest poet. "The connexion of scenes," says Corneille, "is a great ornament to a poem and nothing can better assure us of the continuity of action than the continuity of representation. Still it is an ornament and no rule, for the ancients did not always submit to it," &c. How! has tragedy become so much more perfect with the French since the days of their great Corneille, that the lack of that which he held but an ornament, has now become an unpardonable fault? Or have the French since his time forgotten yet more the essential of tragedy, that they lay so much stress on matters that in the main have no value? Until this question is decided we may at least consider Corneille as trustworthy as Lindelle, and what, according to him, is no decided fault in Maffei may be placed against the less questionable one of Voltaire that he often leaves the stage much fuller than need be. When, for instance, in the first act, Polyphontes comes to the queen, and the queen goes out with the third scene, with what right can Polyphontes linger in the rooms of the queen? Is this room the place in which he should speak freely with his confidantes? The need of the poet is betrayed yet more in the fourth scene, in which we learn, it is true, matters which we must learn, but which we learn in a place where we should never have expected so to do.

IV. Maffei often does not motivate the exits and entrances of his personages: Voltaire often motivates them falsely, which is far worse. It is not enough that a person says why he comes on, we ought also to perceive by the connexion that he must therefore come. It is not enough that he says why he goes off, we ought to see subsequently that he really went on that account. Else that which the poet places in his mouth is mere excuse and no cause. When for example, Eurykles goes off in the third scene of

the second act in order, as he says, to assemble the friends of the queen, we ought to hear afterwards about these friends and their assemblage. As however we hear nothing of the kind, his assertion is a schoolboy "Peto veniam exeundi," the first falsehood that occurs to the boy. He does not go off in order to do what he says, but in order to return a few lines further on as the bearer of news which the poet did not know how to impart by means of any other person Voltaire treats the end of whole acts yet more clumsily. At the close of the third act Polyphontes says to Merope that the altar awaits her, that all is ready for the solemnization of their marriage and he exits with a *Venez Madame* But Madame does not come, but goes off into another *coulisse* with an exclamation, whereupon Polyphontes opens the fourth act, and instead of expressing his annoyance that the queen has not followed him into the temple (for he had been in error, there was still time for the wedding) he talks with his Erox about matters he should not ventilate here, that are more fitting conversation for his own house, his own rooms. Then the fourth act closes, closes exactly like the third Polyphontes again summons the queen into the temple, Merope herself exclaims —

"Courons tous vers le temple où m'attend mon outrage,"

and says to the chief priests who come to conduct her thither.—

"Vous venez à l'autel entraîner la victime."

Consequently we must expect to see them inside the temple at the beginning of the fifth act, or are they already back again? Neither; good things will take time, Polyphontes has forgotten something and comes back again and sends the queen back again. Excellent! Between the third and fourth, and between the fourth and fifth acts nothing occurs that should, and indeed nothing occurs at all, and the third and fourth acts only close in order that the fourth and fifth may begin.

No. 46.

It is one thing to circumvent the rules, another to observe them. The French do the former, the latter was only understood by the ancients.

Unity of action was the first dramatic law of the ancients, unity of time and place were mere consequences of the former which they would scarcely have observed more strictly than exigency required had not the combination with the chorus arisen. For since their actions required the presence of a large body of people and this concourse always remained the same, who could go no further from their dwellings nor remain absent longer than it is customary to do from mere curiosity, they were almost obliged to make the scene of action one and the same spot and confine the time to one and the same day. They submitted *bonâ fide* to this restriction, but with a suppleness of understanding such that in seven cases out of nine they gained more than they lost thereby. For they used this restriction as a reason for simplifying the action and to cut away all that was superfluous, and thus, reduced to essentials, it became only the ideal of an action which was developed most felicitously in this form which required the least addition from circumstances of time and place.

The French on the contrary, who found no charms in true unity of action, who had been spoilt by the wild intrigues of the Spanish school, before they had learnt to know Greek simplicity, regarded the unity of time and place not as consequences of unity of action, but as circumstances absolutely needful to the representation of an action, to which they must therefore adapt their richer and more complicated actions with all the severity required in the use of a chorus, which however they had totally abolished. When they found however, how difficult, nay at times how impossible this was, they made a truce with the tyrannical rules against which they had not the courage to rebel. Instead of a single place, they introduced an uncertain place, under which we could imagine now this, now that spot; enough if the places combined were not too far apart and none required

special scenery, so that the same scenery could fit the one about as well as the other. Instead of the unity of a day they substituted unity of duration, and a certain period during which no one spoke of sunrise or sunset, or went to bed, or at least did not go to bed more than once, however much might occur in this space, they allowed to pass as a day.

Now no one would have objected to this, for unquestionably even thus excellent plays can be made, and the proverb says, cut the wood where it is thinnest. But I must also allow my neighbour the same privilege. I must not always show him the thickest part, and cry, "There you must cut! That is where I cut!" Thus the French critics all exclaim, especially when they speak of the dramatic works of the English. What a to-do they then make of regularity, that regularity which they have made so easy to themselves! But I am weary of dwelling on this point!

As far as I am concerned Voltaire's and Maffei's 'Merope' may extend over eight days and the scene may be laid in seven places in Greece! if only they had the beauties to make me forget these pedantries!

The strictest observation of the rules cannot outweigh the smallest fault in a character. How tamely Polyphontes talks and acts in Maffei's play has not escaped Lindelle. He is right to mock at the needless maxims that Maffei places in the tyrant's mouth. To remove the best and noblest in the state; to sink the people in sensuality that should sap its strength and make it effeminate; to leave unpunished the greatest crimes under the guise of pity and mercy, etc.; if there be tyrants who reign in this silly mode, will they boast of their method? Thus tyrants are depicted in a schoolboy's essay, but they never speak thus themselves.[1] It is true that Voltaire

[1] Atto III. sc. 2:—

". . . Quando
Saran da poi sopiti alquanto, e queti
Gli animi, l'arte del regnar mi giovi.
Per mute oblique vie n'andranno a Stige
L'alme più audaci, e generose. A i vizi
Per cui vigor si abbatte, ardir si toglie
Il freno allargherò. Lunga clemenza

does not suffer his Polyphontes to declaim in so chilly and insane a manner, but occasionally he lets him say things that certainly no man of his kind would speak. For example .—

"Des Dieux quelquefois la longue patience
Fait sur nous à pas lents descendre la vengeance"—

A Polyphontes ought to make this reflexion, but he never does. Still less would he make it at a moment when he encourages himself to new crimes.

"Eh bien, encore ce crime!" . . .

How absurdly he acts towards Merope I have already indicated. His behaviour towards Ægisthus is still less like a cunning and resolute man such as the poet depicted him at first. Ægisthus ought not to have appeared at the sacrifice. What was he to do there? To swear obedience? Before the people? Amid the cries of his despairing mother? Must not that inevitably occur which Polyphontes feared before?[2] He has every thing to fear for his person from Ægisthus; Ægisthus only

Con pompa di pietà farò, che splenda
Su i delinquenti; a i gran delitti invito,
Onde restino i buoni esposti, e paghi
Renda gl' iniqui la licenza, ed onde
Poi fra se distruggendosi, in crudeli
Gare private il lor furor si stempri.
Udrai sovente risonar gli editti,
E raddopiar le leggi, che al sovrano
Giovan servate, e transgredite. Udrai
Correr minaccia ognor di guerra esterna
Ond' io n' andrò su l' atterrita plebe
Sempre crescendo i pesi, e peregrine
Milizie introdurrò . . ."

[2] Acte I sc. 4:—
"Si ce fils, tant pleuré, dans Messène est produit,
De quinze ans de travaux j'ai perdu tout le fruit.
Crois-moi, ces préjugés de sang et de naissance
Revivront dans les cœurs y prendront sa défense.
Le souvenir du père, et cent rois pour ayeux.
Cet honneur prétendu d'être issu de nos Dieux;
Les cris, le désespoir d'une mère éplorée,
Détruiront ma puissance encor mal assurée"

demands his sword back in order to decide the whole quarrel between them, and this madly bold Ægisthus he suffers to come near him at the altar where the first implement he seizes upon, may be a sword. Maffei's Polyphontes is free from this absurdity, for he does not know Ægisthus and deems him his friend. What then was to hinder Ægisthus from approaching him at the altar? No one observed his movements, the blow was struck, the second ready before it occurred to any one to avenge the first.

"Merope," says Lindelle "when Maffei lets her know that her son is murdered, desires to tear the heart of the murderer from his body and to rend it with her teeth.[3] That is expressing oneself like a cannibal and not like a sorrowing mother; *bienséance* must everywhere be observed." Quite true; but though the French Merope is too refined to desire to eat such a raw heart without salt or dripping, yet it seems to me that she is at bottom as much of a *cannibal* as the Italian.

No. 47.

And how so? If it is unquestionable that we must judge men more by their deeds than by their words: if a hasty word spoken in the heat of passion proves little for their moral character, but a deliberate cool action proves all, then I am right. Merope who abandons herself to anxious sorrow while uncertainty reigns regarding her son's fate, and who extends her pity to all unfortunates in the remembering how unhappy her absent son may be, is the ideal of a mother. Merope who at the moment that she hears of the loss of the object of all this tenderness, sinks down staggered and then rouses herself and raves and threatens and intends to execute the most bloody, most terrible vengeance on him who is in her power; this

[3] Atto II sc 6 —

"Quel scelerato in mio poter vorrei
Per trarne prima, s' ebbe parte in questo
Assassinio il tiranno, io voglio poi
Con una scure spalancargli il petto,
Voglio strappargli il cor, voglio co' denti
Lacerarlo, e sbranarlo. . . ."

Merope remains the same ideal, only in the condition of violent action in which she gains in strength and expression what she has lost in beauty and tenderness. But Merope who takes time for her revenge, prepares for it, arranges solemnities for it, desires herself to be executioner, not to kill but to torture, not to punish but to gloat over the punishment. is this one a mother? Even so, but a mother as we imagine her among cannibals, a mother such as every she-bear is. This action of Merope may please whom it lists, only let him not tell me that it pleases him, if I am not to despise as well as loathe him. Perhaps M. de Voltaire would put this down also to a fault in the subject, perhaps he would say Merope must kill Ægisthus with her own hand or the whole *coup de théâtre* so praised by Aristotle, which the sensitive Athenians so delighted in, would fall away. But M. de Voltaire would be wrong again, and again have confounded the arbitrary deviation of Maffei with the subject itself. It is true the subject demands that Merope should kill Ægisthus with her own hand, but it does not demand that she should do so upon reflexion. And without reflexion she must have done it in Euripides if we are to regard Hyginus's fable as the abstract of his play. The old man comes weeping to the queen and says that her son has disappeared; she has just heard that a stranger has arrived who boasts that he has murdered him and that this stranger is sleeping quietly under her roof; she seizes the first thing that falls to hand, tears angrily into the room of the sleeper. the old man follows her and the recognition occurs at the moment in which the crime was to be perpetrated. That was very simple and natural, very touching and human. The Athenians trembled for Ægisthus without being obliged to loathe Merope. They trembled for Merope herself whose noble precipitancy made her run the risk of being her son's murderer. Now Maffei and Voltaire only make me tremble for Ægisthus, for I am so out of patience with their Merope that I should almost like to see her execute her deed. Would that she might have this satisfaction! If she can take time to execute her revenge she ought also to have found time for investigation. Why is she such a bloodthirsty animal? He has murdered her son; very

good, she may do with the murderer what she will in the first heat of passion, I forgive her, for she is a mortal and a mother. I will willingly weep and despair with her if she should find how much cause she has to regret this first rash heat. But madam, a young man who shortly before interested you so much, in whom you recognised so many signs of candour and innocence, need you slaughter him with your own hand on the tomb of his father as the murderer of your son, need you call priests and guards to your aid because you find him in posession of an old suit of armour that only your son should wear? Oh! fie! madam I am greatly mistaken or you would have been hissed in Athens

That the maladroitness with which after fifteen years Polyphontes demands the aged Merope as his wife is as little a fault of the subject, I have mentioned before. For according to Hyginus's fable Polyphontes married Merope immediately after the murder of Kresphontes and it is quite conceivable that Euripides should have assumed this circumstance. And why not? The very reasons with which Voltaire's Eurykles urges Merope after fifteen years to bestow her hand upon the tyrant would have been as valid fifteen years earlier.[1] It was quite in

[1] Acte II sc 1 —

"MER. Non, mon fils ne le souffrirait pas.
L'exil où son enfance a langui condamnée
Lui serait moins affreux que ce lâche hyménée.
EUR Il le condamnerait, si, paisible en son rang,
Il n'en croyait ici que les droits de son sang;
Mais, si par les malheurs son âme était instruite,
Sur ses vrais intérêts s'il réglait sa conduite,
De ses tristes amis s'il consultait la voix,
Et la nécessité souveraine des loix,
Il verrait que jamais sa malheureuse mère
Ne lui donna d'amour une marque plus chère
MER Ah que me dites-vous?
EUR De dures vérités
Qui m'arrachent mon zèle et vos calamités
MER. Quoi! Vous me demandez que l'intérêt surmonte
Cette invincible horreur que j'ai pour Polifonte!
Vous qui me l'avez peint de si noires couleurs!
EUR Je l'ai peint dangereux, je connais ses fureurs,
Mais il est tout-puissant; mais rien ne lui résiste;
Il est sans heritier, et vous aimez Égiste"

character with the ancient Greek women that they conquered their abhorrence against the murderers of their husbands and accept them in their place if they thought that the children of their first marriage would gain advantage thereby: I remember to have read something similar in the Greek novel of Chariton published by D'Orville in which a mother very touchingly takes her unborn child to judge between them. I think the passage deserves to be quoted but I have not the book at hand. Enough that that which Voltaire puts into the mouth of Eurykles would have been sufficient to justify Merope's conduct if he had introduced her as the wife of Polyphontes. The cold scenes of political love-making would thereby have fallen away and I see more than one method by which this might have heightened the interest and made the situations yet more involved.

But Voltaire insisted on remaining on the road that Maffei had levelled for him; and because it never occurred to him that there could be a better and that this better was the one that had already been traversed in ancient times, he satisfied himself with removing a few sandstones out of the path over which he thought his predecessor had nearly capsized. Would he otherwise have retained the circumstance that Ægisthus, ignorant of his own identity, should accidentally have come to Messene, and there have aroused the suspicion that he was his own murderer owing to petty dubious indications? In Euripides, Ægisthus knew himself perfectly, came to Messene for the express purpose of revenging himself, and gave himself out to be the murderer of Ægisthus. He did not discover himself to his mother, be it from suspicion, from caution, or from whatever cause, it is certain that the poet did not let him lack for reasons. I have above lent some of my own reasons to Maffei to account for the changes he has made with Euripides' plot, but I am far removed from regarding the reasons as sufficient, the changes felicitous; I rather assert that every step that he ventured aside from the footprints of the Greeks became a false step; that Ægisthus does not know himself, that he chances to come to Messene and "per combinazione d'accidenti" (as Maffei expresses it) is regarded as the

murderer of Ægisthus, not only gives to the whole story a very confused, dubious and romance-like aspect but greatly weakens the interest. With Euripides the spectators knew from Ægisthus himself that it was Ægisthus, and the more certainly they knew that Merope was coming to murder her own son, the greater necessarily must be the horror that possessed them on this account, the more torturing the pity which befell them lest Merope should not be hindered in time from the execution of her deed. Now Maffei and Voltaire, on the contrary, only let us suspect that the assumed murderer of the son may be the son himself and our greatest terror is therefore reserved for the sole moment in which it ceases to be terror. And the worst is this, that the reasons which lead us to suppose that the young stranger is the son of Merope are the very reasons from which Merope should suppose this, and we do not know him, especially in Voltaire, more closely and certainly than she ought to know him herself. We either trust as much to these reasons as Merope trusts to them or we trust more. If we trust as much, we must with her deem the youth a deceiver, and the fate that she intends for him touches us very little If we trust more, we must censure Merope that she is not more observant and lets herself be carried away by such shallow reasons. Neither case is desirable.

No. 48.

It is true our surprise is greater if we do not know with certainty that Ægisthus is Ægisthus before Merope knows it. But what a poor amusement is this surprise! And why need the poet surprise us? He may surprise his personages as much as he likes We shall still derive our advantage therefrom, even if we have long foreseen what befalls them so unexpectedly. Nay our sympathy will be the more vivid and the stronger, the longer and more certainly we have foreseen it.

On this point I will allow the best French art critic to speak for me. "In involved plays," says Diderot,[1] "the

[1] In his dramatic poetics after the 'Père de famille.'

interest is owing more to the plot than to the words, while in simple plays, the effect rests on the words rather than on the plot." But to what is this interest to refer? To the personages? to the spectators? the spectators are only witnesses, of whom we know nothing, consequently it is the personages whom we must consider. Unquestionably. Let these knot the complication without knowing it, let it be impenetrable for them, bring them without their knowledge nearer and nearer to the *dénouement*. If the personages feel emotion we spectators shall yield to the same feelings, shall feel them also. I am far removed from believing with the majority of those who have written on the dramatic art that the *dénouement* should be hid from the spectator. I rather think it would not exceed my powers to rouse the very strongest interest in the spectators even if I resolved to make a work where the *dénouement* was revealed in the first scene. Everything must be clear for the spectator, he is the confidant of each person, he knows everything that occurs, everything that has occurred and there are hundreds of instances when we cannot do better than to tell him straight out what is going to occur.

O ye manufacturers of general rules, how little do ye understand art, how little do ye possess of the genius that brought forth the masterpieces upon which ye build and which it may overstep as often as it lists!—— My thoughts may appear as paradoxical as they like, yet so much I know for certain, that for one instance where it is useful to conceal from the spectator an important event until it has taken place there are ten and more where interest demands the very contrary. By means of secrecy a poet effects a short surprise, but in what enduring disquietude could he have maintained us if he had made no secret about it! Whoever is struck down in a moment, I can only pity for a moment. But how if I expect the blow, how if I see the storm brewing and threatening for some time about my head or his? For my part none of the personages need know each other if only the spectator knows them all Nay I would even maintain that the subject which requires such secrecy is a thankless subject, that the plot in which we have to take recourse

to it is not as good as that in which we could have done without it It will never give occasion for anything great We shall be obliged to occupy ourselves with preparations that are either too dark or too clear, the whole poem becomes a collection of little artistic tricks by means of which we effect nothing more than a short surprise. If on the contrary everything that concerns the personages is known, I see in this knowledge the source of the most violent emotions. Why have certain monologues such a great effect? Because they acquaint me with the secret intentions of the speaker and this confidence at once fills me with hope or fear. If the condition of the personages is unknown, the spectator cannot interest himself more vividly in the action than the personages But the interest would be doubled for the spectator if light is thrown on the matter, and he feels that action and speech would be quite otherwise if the personages knew one another.

Only then I shall scarcely be able to await what is to become of them when I am able to compare that which they really are with that which they do or would do.

Applying this to Ægisthus it is evident to which of the two plots Diderot would incline to the old one of Euripides where the spectators know Ægisthus from the beginning as well as he knows himself, or to the new one of Maffei so blindly accepted by Voltaire where Ægisthus is a riddle to himself and the spectators, and the whole play is thus made into a collection of little artistic tricks that effect nothing but a short surprise.

Diderot is not wrong in pronouncing his thoughts on the superfluity and poverty of all uncertain expectations and sudden surprises to be as new as they are valid They are new in regard to their abstraction, but very old in regard to the patterns from which they are abstracted. They are new in consideration that his predecessors have always insisted on the contrary, but neither Horace nor Aristotle belong to these predecessors, they never uttered anything that could confirm their exponents and successors in their predilection for this contrary method the good effects of which they could not have perceived from the greater number or from the best plays of the ancients. Among

these Euripides was so certain of himself that he almost always showed his spectators the goal whither he would lead them. Nay I should be inclined to defend his prologues that have so displeased modern critics from this very point of view. "Not enough," says Hedelin, "that he generally lets one of his chief characters narrate to the spectators what has preceded the action of his play in order to give them comprehension for what follows; he often employs a god for this purpose, of whom he may assume that he knows everything and through whom he acquaints us not only with what has occurred but with what will occur. We are thus initiated at the beginning into the plot and the whole catastrophe, and foresee every event. This is a very serious fault, totally opposed to that uncertainty and expectancy that should always reign on the stage, it destroys all the pleasure of a play, that should rest simply and solely on novelty and surprise."[2] No, the most tragic of all tragic poets did not think so meanly of his art, he knew it was capable of yet greater perfection and that the gratification of a childish curiosity was the least of the pretensions it set up He therefore deliberately let his spectators know as much of the coming action as any god might know, and promised to awaken their emotions, not so much by that which should occur, as by the mode in which it should occur. Consequently the art critics ought to find no stumbling-block here except this, that he did not seek to convey to us the necessary knowledge of the past and the future by a more subtle mode, but that he had to employ for this a Higher Being who probably had nothing to do with the action, and that this Higher Being manifestly addressed the spectators, by which means the dramatic *genre* was confounded with the narrative. But if they restricted their blame to this, what then is their blame? Is the useful and necessary never welcome to us except when it is secretly forced upon us? Are there not matters, especially in the future, which no one but a god can know, and if the interest rests on such matters, is it not better we should know them beforehand through the intervention of a god

[1] Pratique du theâtre, liv 3, chap i.

than not at all? And finally what do we mean by the mixtures of genres? In our primers it is right we should separate them from one another as carefully as possible, but if a genius, for higher purposes amalgamates several of them in one and the same work, let us forget our primer and only examine whether he has attained these higher purposes. What do I care whether a play of Euripides is neither wholly a narrative nor wholly a drama, call it a hybrid, enough that this hybrid pleases me more, edifies me more, than the most rule-correct creations of your correct Racines or whatever else they may be called. Because the mule is neither a horse nor an ass, is it therefore the less one of the most useful beasts of burden?

No. 49.

In a word, where the detractors of Euripides see nothing but a poet who from indolence or incapacity, or both causes, endeavours to make his work as easy to himself as possible, where they think that they discover dramatic art in its cradle, I think I see it in its perfection, and admire in Euripides the master who is in reality as correct as they demand, and only seems to be less correct because he wished to accord to his plays one beauty more for which they have no comprehension.

For it is clear that all the plays whose prologues annoy them so much would be completely and entirely comprehensible without these prologues. Erase for instance from 'Ion' the prologue of Mercury, from 'Hecuba' the prologue of Polydorus, let the one begin with the morning devotions of Ion, the other with the complaints of Hecuba, are either of them therefore in the least mutilated? How could you miss that which you have erased if it was not there at all? Does not everything maintain the same sequence, the same connexion? You must even confess that the plays would be more beautiful according to your mode of thought if we did not know from the prologues that Ion, whom Creusa intends to poison, is the son of this Creusa, that this Creusa whom Ion wishes to tear from the altar to a shameful death is the mother of this Ion. if we did not know that on the very day on which Hecuba must

abandon her daughter for sacrifice the unhappy old woman is also to hear of the death of her last surviving son. For all these would bring about excellent surprises, and these surprises would be sufficiently prepared without your being able to say they suddenly broke out like lightning from a white cloud; they do not follow, they arise, it is not intended to disclose something to you but to impose something upon you, and yet you still quarrel with the poet? You still reproach him with want of art. Forgive him a fault that a single stroke of the pen can make good, a gardener quietly lops off the superfluous branch, without scolding at the healthy tree that has brought it forth . Now if you would assume for a moment —it is true I am going to ask you to assume a great deal —that Euripides had as much insight, could have as much taste as you, and you wonder the more how with so much insight, so refined taste, he yet could commit so grave a fault, come over to me and regard what you call his faults from my point of view. Euripides knew as well as we that his 'Ion' for instance could stand without the prologue, that without this it was a play which sustained the interest and uncertainty of the spectator to the close, but he did not care for this uncertainty and expectation. For if the spectator only learned in the fifth act that Ion was the son of Creusa, then it is not for them her son, but a stranger, an enemy, whom she seeks to make away with in the third act; then it is not for them the mother of Ion on whom Ion seeks to avenge himself in the fourth act, but only a murderess. Whence then should fear and pity arise? The mere presumption that could be deduced from coincident circumstances that Ion and Creusa might have some connexion would not be sufficient for this, this assumption must become a certainty, and if the spectator could only receive this certainty from outside, if it was not possible for one of the acting personages to initiate him, was it not better that the poet should initiate him in the only possible way rather than not at all? Say of this method what you will, enough if it has helped him to attain his goal, his tragedy is throughout what a tragedy should be, and if you are still dissatisfied that the form should give place to the essential then

supply your learned criticism with nothing but plays where the essential is sacrificed to the form, and you are rewarded. Let Whitehead's 'Creusa' please you henceforth, in which no god predicts, in which you learn everything from an old garrulous confidante who is questioned by a cunning gipsy, let these please you better henceforth than Euripides' 'Ion,' I shall not envy you.

When Aristotle speaks of Euripides as the most tragic of all tragic poets he did not merely mean that most of his plays end with an unhappy catastrophe, although I am aware that many thus interpret the Stagyrite. For this trick could easily be copied, and the bungler who murders and slaughters right and left, and allows none of his personages to leave the stage whole or alive, would then be permitted to think himself as tragic as Euripides. Unquestionably Aristotle had various qualities in mind when he accorded him this epithet. No doubt the above-named quality belonged to those by means of which the author let the spectators foresee all the misfortunes that were to befall his personages, in order to gain their sympathy while these were yet far removed from deeming that they required sympathy. Sokrates was the master and friend of Euripides, and hence how many might imagine that the poet owed to this friendship with the philosopher all the wealth of splendid maxims that he has scattered so profusely throughout his plays! I think that he owed far more to him; he might have been just as rich in maxims without him, but he would scarcely have been as tragic without him Fine sentences and moral maxims are just what we are likely to hear least from a philosopher like Sokrates, his life was the only moral that he preached. But what we learn in his society is to know man and ourselves; to be observant of our motions; to search for and to love the smoothest and shortest paths of nature; to judge each matter according to its intention; this was what Euripides learned from Sokrates and what made him the first in his art. Happy the poet who has such a friend and can consult with him every day, every hour.

Even Voltaire seems to have felt that it would be well if he could acquaint us from the beginning with the son

of Merope, if we could start with the knowledge that the amiable unhappy youth whom Merope shields at first, and whom she afterwards desires to kill as the murderer of her Ægisthus, is Ægisthus himself. But the youth does not know himself, and there is no one there who knows him better and through whom he could learn it. What then does the poet do? How does he provide that we should know with certainty that Merope is raising the dagger against her own son, even before old Narbas calls to her? Oh! he sets about this most cunningly! Only a Voltaire could have thought of such an artistic trick. As soon as the unknown youth enters, he places the name Ægisthus in large, distinct beautiful letters over the first speech he has to make, and so on over all the following. Now we know it, for Merope has in the preceding scenes named her son more than once, and even if she had not done so we need only refer to the list of *Dramatis personæ* printed at the commencement, to find it there in full! It is certainly rather comic when the person above whose speeches we have a dozen times read the name Ægisthus, on being asked:—

"Narbas vous est connu?
Le nom d'Égiste au moins jusqu'à vous est venu?
Quel était votre état, votre rang, votre père?"

replies.—

"Mon père est un vieillard accablé de misère;
Polyclète est son nom, mais Égiste, Narbas,
Ceux dont vous me parlez, je ne les connais pas."

It is also remarkable that we hear no other name from this Ægisthus who is not called Ægisthus; that when he replies to the queen that his father is called Polyclete, he does not add, and I am called so and so. For a name he must needs have, and M de Voltaire could surely have invented that also, seeing he has invented so much! Readers who are not well acquainted with the tricks of a tragedy, could easily go astray here. They read that a youth is brought in who has committed murder on the highway; this youth they see is named Ægisthus, but he

says he is not called so, and yet does not say what he is called Oh! this youth, they presume, is not all right, he is an accomplished highwayman, young though he is, and innocently though he poses. Thus, I say, inexperienced readers are in danger of concluding, and yet I believe seriously speaking, that it is better that the experienced reader should learn even in this wise from the beginning who the unknown youth is, than not at all. Only do not tell me that this method of informing them is in the least bit more artistic and subtle than a prologue after the manner of Euripides.

No. 50.

Maffei gives the youth his two names, as is due: he is called Ægisthus as the son of Polydorus and Kresphontes as the son of Merope In the list of personages he is only introduced under the former name, and Becelli took no small credit to himself for the fact that in his edition of the play, the true identity of Ægisthus could not be guessed[1] For the Italians are even greater friends to surprises than the French.

But Merope for ever! In truth I pity my readers who promised to themselves in this journal a theatrical newspaper as varied and manifold, as amusing and comical as a theatrical newspaper should be. Instead of containing the story of the plays performed, told in short lively and touching romances, instead of detailed biographies of absurd, eccentric, foolish beings, such as those must be who concern themselves with writing comedies, instead of amusing, even slightly scandalous anecdotes of actors and especially actresses, instead of all these pretty things which they expected, they get long, serious, dry criticisms of old well-known plays; ponderous examinations of what tragedy should or should not be, at times even expositions of Aristotle. And they are to read this? As I say, I pity them: they have been grievously deceived. But let me add in confidence, better they,

[1] "Fin ne i nomi de' Personnaggi si è levato quell' errore, comunissimo alle stampe d' ogni drama, di scoprire il secreto nel premettergli, e per conseguenza di levare il piacere a chi legge, overo ascolta, essendosi messo Egisto, dove era, Cresfonte sotto nome d'Egisto."

than I. And I should be much deceived if I made their expectations my law. Not that their expectations would be very difficult to fulfil; no indeed, I should rather find them very easy, if only they agreed better with my intentions.

But I must indeed try to get over the subject of 'Merope.' I really only wished to show that Voltaire's 'Merope' was *au fond* nothing but the 'Merope' of Maffei, and I think I have proved this. Aristotle says that it is not the same subject, but the same treatment and *dénouement* that make two or more plays to be held one and the same. Therefore it is not because Voltaire has treated the same story as Maffei, but because he has treated it in the same way, that I here pronounce him nothing but the translator and imitator of Maffei; Maffei did not merely reconstruct the 'Merope' of Euripides, he made a 'Merope' of his own; for he departed utterly from the plan of Euripides, and in the intention to write a play without love, in which the whole interest hinges on maternal affection, he subverted the entire fable; whether for good or evil is not in question here, he subverted it totally. Voltaire took from Maffei this whole subverted fable; he took from him the fact that Merope is not married to Polyphontes, he took from him the political reasons for which the tyrant thinks he must, after fifteen years, insist on this union; he took from him the fact that the son of Merope does not know himself; he took from him the cause and manner of his leaving his reputed father; he took from him the incident that Ægisthus is brought to Messene as a murderer; he took from him the misunderstanding by means of which he is held to be his own murderer; he took from him the vague emotions of maternal love when Merope sees Ægisthus for the first time; he took from him the reason why Ægisthus was to die before Merope's eyes, by her hand; he took from him the discovery of his accomplices, in short Voltaire took from Maffei the whole plot. And did he not further borrow from him the whole *dénouement?* did he not learn from him to connect the sacrifice at which Polyphontes is to be murdered with the entire action? Maffei made it a marriage-feast, and perhaps he only let his tyrant at last

think of this union with Merope, in order that the sacrifice might be brought in more naturally, What Maffei invented, Voltaire copied.

It is true that Voltaire has given a different turn to some of the events that he took from Maffei. For instance, instead of Polyphontes having already reigned fifteen years, he allows disorder to have existed in Messene for fifteen years and thus leaves the state in probable anarchy for this long time. Instead of making Ægisthus be attacked on the high-road by a robber, he makes him be attacked in the temple of Hercules, by two unknown personages who are offended at his invoking the aid of Hercules for the Heraclidæ, the god of the temple for his descendants. Instead of letting suspicion be aroused by a ring, as in Maffei, Voltaire arouses this by armour, and so on. But all these changes only regard trifles, that are nearly all beside the play and have no influence on its economy. And yet I would allow these changes to Voltaire as expressions of his creative genius if I could only discover that he had understood how to alter that which he thought required alteration. I will explain myself by one of the quoted examples. Maffei makes his Ægisthus be attacked by a robber who seizes the moment when he sees him alone on the high-road, near to a bridge over the Pamise. Ægisthus overcomes the robber and throws his body into the river, out of fear that if the body be found in the road, the murderer may be pursued and he be recognised as such A robber who wishes to rob a prince of his coat and purse is far too common a picture for my noble, delicate *parterre*, thought Voltaire; it would be better to make out of this robber a malcontent who desires to put Ægisthus out of the way as a follower of the Heraclidæ. And why only one? Better two, that makes Ægisthus's heroic deed the greater, and the one who escapes of these two, if I make him much older, can afterwards be regarded as Narbas. Very good, my dear compiler, but now farther, what next? Why Ægisthus has killed one of these malcontents, what does he do then? He also carries the dead body to the water. What? and how? and why? From the deserted road to the near river, that is comprehensible; but from the temple

to the river? Was no one then in the temple except these three? Granted even this, for even this is not the greatest absurdity. The *how* could be yet imagined, but not the why. Maffei's Ægisthus bears the body to the river because he fears to be pursued and recognised, because he thinks that if he has made away with the body, nothing can reveal his deed, that this will be buried in the river with the corpse. But can Voltaire's Ægisthus imagine this? Never more, or the second man ought not to have escaped. Will this one be satisfied that he has escaped with his life? Will he not observe him from afar, however afeared he may be? Will he not pursue him with cries until others detain him? Will he not indict him and bear witness against him? What will it then avail the murderer that he has borne the *corpus delicti* out of the way? Here is an eye-witness who can prove all. He might have saved himself this useless trouble and rather have hurried to get across the boundary. It is true that the body had to be thrown into the water because of what was coming after; it was as needful for Voltaire as for Maffei that Merope should not be undeceived by its aspect; only that what in the one case Ægisthus does for his own benefit, he does for the benefit of the poet in the other. For Voltaire corrected away the cause without reflecting that he needed the effect of this cause, which henceforward depended on nothing but his necessity.

One single change made by Voltaire in Maffei's plan deserves the name of an improvement; namely that of suppressing Merope's repeated attempts to avenge herself on her son's presumed murderer, and letting the recognition on the part of Ægisthus take place in the presence of Polyphontes. Herein I recognise the poet, and especially the second scene of the fourth act is excellent. I only wish that the general recognition that must follow in the fourth scene of the third act had been managed with more art. For that Ægisthus is suddenly led away by Eurykles and that the depth of the scene closes behind him, is a very forced method. It is not a hair's-breadth better than the precipitate flight by which Ægisthus saves himself in Maffei and concerning which Voltaire

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lets Lindelle speak so mockingly. Or rather this flight is more natural if only the poet had afterwards brought mother and son once together and had not entirely kept from us the first touching expressions of their mutual emotions. Perhaps Voltaire would not have separated the recognition scene if he had not been forced to expand his material in order to make five acts of it. He complains more than once about "cette longue carrière de cinq actes qui est prodigieusement difficile à remplir sans épisodes"—And now for the present enough of 'Merope.'

Nos. 54 and 55.

[Lessing treats at great length the source and subject of an English tragedy by John Banks. 'The Earl of Essex.' Referring to the box on the ear given by the Queen to Essex, he proceeds to treat of this in general.]

A box on the ear in a tragedy! How English, how unbecoming! But before my over-refined readers mock at this too much, I beg to remind them of a similar act in the 'Cid.' M de Voltaire's commentary concerning this is curious in many respects. "Nowadays," he says. "we should not dare to allow our heroes to have their ears boxed. The actors themselves would not know how to set about this, they only make believe to give one. Not even in comedy is such a thing allowed any longer, and this is the only example we have of it on the tragic stage." "It is possible that this among other reasons may explain why the 'Cid' has been named a tragi-comedy, and at that time nearly all the plays of Scuderi and Boisrobert were tragi-comedies We had long been of opinion in France that uninterrupted tragedy, without all intermixture of common traits, was not to be borne The word tragi-comedy itself is very old. Plautus employs it to define his 'Amphitryon,' because though the adventure of Sosia is comic, Amphitryon himself is seriously distressed thereby." What things M. de Voltaire does write! How gladly he turns on a little learning and how ill it generally becomes him!

It is not true that the box on the ear in the 'Cid' is the only one on the tragic stage. Voltaire either did not

know the Essex of Banks or he assumed that the tragic stage of his nation alone deserved the name. Either hypothesis betrays ignorance, and the latter yet more vanity than ignorance. What he adds about the name of tragi-comedy is equally false. Tragi-comedy is the representation of an important action that takes place among noble persons and has a happy end. Such is the 'Cid' and the box on the ear did not come into consideration, for notwithstanding this box on the ear, Corneille afterwards called his play a tragedy, as soon as he had put aside the prejudice that a tragedy must of necessity have an unhappy catastrophe. Plautus does employ the word *tragicocomœdia*, but he only uses it in fun and not to define a special genus Neither has any one borrowed it of him in this sense, until it occurred to the Spanish and Italian poets of the sixteenth century thus to name certain of their dramatic abortions. But even if Plautus had seriously named his 'Amphitryon' thus, it would yet not have arisen from the cause invented by Voltaire. It is not because Sosia's share in the action is comic, Amphitryon's tragic, that Plautus would have named his play a tragi-comedy. For his play is altogether comic and we as much enjoy Amphitryon's perplexity as Sosia's It must have been because this comic action passes chiefly among nobler personages than it was usual to see in a comedy. Plautus himself clearly expresses this.

> "Faciam ut commixta sit Tragico-comœdia:
> Nam me perpetuo facere ut sit Comœdia
> Reges quo veniant et dî, non par arbitror.
> Quid igitur? quoniam hic servus quoque partes habet,
> Faciam hanc, proinde ut dixi, Tragico-comœdiam."

No. 56.

But to return to the box on the ear. It is the case that a box on the ear received by a man of honour from his equal or superior, is held to be a grave offence, so that all the satisfaction that the laws could give are held vain. It cannot be punished by a third person, it requires the personal revenge of the offended party and demands to be

avenged as arbitrarily as it was offered. Whether it is true or false honour that requires this, that is beside our present question. As I have said, so it is.

And if it is so in the world, why should it not be so on the stage? If a box on the ear can occur in the one, why not in the other?

"The actors do not know how to set about it," says M. de Voltaire. They know quite well, but even as an assumed person no one likes to have a box on the ear. The blow excites them, the assumed character receives it, but they feel it; the feeling destroys the deception, they lose their composure, shame and confusion shows itself in their faces against their will; they should look angry and they look ridiculous; and thus every actor whose own feelings come into collision with his *rôle* makes us laugh.

This is not the only instance in which we might regret the abolition of masks. The actor can unquestionably better command his countenance under a mask; his personality finds less opportunity to break forth and if it does break forth we are less aware of this.

But the actor may act under the box on the ear as he wills; the dramatic poet works for the actor it is true, but he must not therefore deny himself everything that does not suit or is not easy to the actor. No actor can blush when he likes, and still the poet may prescribe it; still he may let one person say that he sees the other changing colour. The actor does not want to be struck in the face, he thinks it makes him contemptible, it confuses him, it pains him. very good. If he has not got so far in his art that such a thing cannot confuse him; if he does not love his art so much that for its sake he can bear a little hurt to his dignity, then let him try to get over the passage as well as he can, let him avoid the blow, ward it off with his hand, only do not let him demand that the poet should take more concern for him than he takes for the person whom he represents. If the true Diego, the true Essex must bear a box on the ear, what have their representatives to say against it?

Perhaps the spectator does not want to see a box on the ear given? or at most given to a servant whom it does not especially offend and for whose position it is a proper

chastisement, while a hero—to give a hero a box on the ear! how petty, how unbecoming! And what if that is just its very purpose? If this very breach of the decorous is to be the source of violent resolutions, bloody revenge? If every other less petty offence could not have provoked this terrible result? Should that which can become so tragical in its consequences, which among certain persons necessarily must become tragical, should that be excluded from tragedy because it finds a place also in comedy, in farce? Can we not be terrified at one time by that which another time makes us laugh?

If I should like to banish the box on the ear from any sort of drama it would be from comedy. For what consequences can it have there? Sad ones? they are beyond its sphere. Ridiculous ones? they are beneath it and belong to farce. None? then it was not worth while to introduce the element. Whoever gives it will only betray vulgar passion and whoever receives it, nothing but slavish pusillanimity. It remains consequently to the two extremes; tragedy and farce, that have more of such things in common over which we either tremble or jeer.

Now I ask every one who has seen the 'Cid' represented or who has read it with attention, whether a shudder did not take hold of him when the boastful Gormas ventures to strike the old venerable Diego; whether he did not feel the deepest pity for the one, the bitterest anger against the other? I ask him whether it did not at once flash through his brain what sad and bloody consequences this shameful offence must bring with it, and whether this did not fill him with fear and expectation? And such an incident, which has such an effect, should not be tragical.

If ever any one laughed at this box on the ear, it was certainly one of the gallery who was too familiar with boxes on the ear and deserved one at that moment from his neighbour. And whoever felt inclined to smile against his will, on account of the awkward manner in which the actors set about it, certainly bit his lips and made haste to fall back again into the illusion out of which every violent action is apt more or less to tear the spectator.

Moreover I ask, what other offence could so well fill the place of the box on the ears? For every other it would be in the power of a king to give satisfaction to the offended; for every other the son might refuse to sacrifice his father to the father of his beloved. For this alone excuse or pardon cannot avail the *pundonor*, and all legitimate means that the monarch himself would employ are fruitless. In this frame of mind Corneille lets Gormas reply to the king, who urges him to satisfy Diego —

"Ces satisfactions n'apaisent point une âme:
Qui les reçoit n'a rien, qui les fait se diffame,
Et de tous ces accords l'effet le plus commun,
C'est de déshonorer deux hommes au lieu d'un."

At that time the edicts against duels, to which such maxims were utterly opposed, had not been long promulgated in France. Corneille received an order to omit the lines, and they were banished out of the mouth of the actor. But every spectator supplemented them from memory and from his own feeling.

In 'Essex' the box on the ear becomes the more critical in that it is given by a person who is not bound by the laws of honour. She is a woman and a queen, what is the offender to do with her? He would ridicule the impetuous, pugnacious woman, for a woman can neither shame us nor beat us But this woman is at the same time a sovereign, whose indignities cannot be expunged, since they receive a kind of authority from her rank. What therefore can be more natural than that Essex revolts against this rank itself and rages against the eminence that removes the offender from his revenge.

. . . .

No. 59.

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Many hold pompous and tragic to be much the same thing. Not only many of the readers but many of the poets themselves. What! their heroes are to talk like ordinary mortals! What sort of heroes would those be? "Ampullæ et sesquipedalia verba," sentences and bubbles

and words a yard long, this constitutes for them the true tone of tragedy.

Diderot says,[1] "We have not omitted anything that could spoil the drama from its very foundations" (Observe that he speaks especially of his countrymen.) "We have retained the whole splendid versification of the ancients that is really only suited to a language of very measured quantities and very marked accents, for very large stages and for a declamation fitted to music and accompanied with instruments But its simplicity in plot and conversation and the truth of its pictures we have abandoned"

Diderot might have added another reason why we cannot throughout take the old tragedies for our pattern. There all the personages speak and converse in a free public place, in presence of an inquisitive multitude. They must therefore nearly always speak with reserve and due regard to their dignity; they cannot give vent to their thoughts and feelings in the first words that come, they must weigh and choose them. But we moderns, who have abolished the chorus, who generally leave our personages between four walls, what reason have we to let them employ such choice stilted rhetorical speech notwithstanding? Nobody hears it except those whom they permit to hear it; nobody speaks to them but people who are involved in the action, who are therefore themselves affected and have neither desire nor leisure to control expressions. This was only to be feared from the chorus who never acted, however much they might be involved in the play, and always rather judged the acting personages than took a real part in their fate. It is as useless to invoke the high rank of the personages; aristocratic persons have learned how to express themselves better than the common man, but they do not affect incessantly to express themselves better than he. Least of all in moments of passion; since every passion has its own eloquence, is alone inspired by nature, is learnt in no school and is understood by the most uneducated as well as by the most polished.

[1] Second conversation following 'The Natural Son.'

There never can be feeling with a stilted, chosen, pompous, language. It is not born of feeling, it cannot evoke it. But feeling agrees with the simplest, commonest, plainest words and expressions. . . .

. . . .

Nothing is more chaste and decent than simple Nature, coarseness and confusion are as far removed from her as pomposity and bombast from the sublime The same feeling which makes the boundary there, makes it here. The most pompous poet is therefore infallibly the most vulgar. Both faults are inseparable, and no species gives more opportunities of falling into both than tragedy.

[Lessing now devotes many pages to a detailed account of an old and anonymous Spanish play dealing with the subject of Essex.]

No. 69.

Although Lope de Vega is regarded as the creator of the Spanish theatre, it was not he who introduced its hybrid tone. The people were already so accustomed to it, that he had to assume it against his will. In his didactic poem concerning the art of making new comedies he greatly laments the fact. As he saw that it was not possible to work to the satisfaction of his contemporaries according to the rules and example of the ancients, he strove at least to put limits to their irregularities; that was the intention of his poem. He thought, wild and barbaric as the taste of the nation was, it must yet have its principles, and it was better to act according to these with constant uniformity than with none. Plays which do not observe the classical rules may yet observe rules, and must observe something of the kind, if they are to please These rules deduced from the national taste he wished to establish, and the combination of the serious and the ludicrous was the first.

He said, "You may let kings appear in your comedies. It is true I hear that our wise monarch (Philip II.) did not approve of this, either because he recognised that it was against the rules, or because he deemed it beneath the dignity of a king to be mixed up with the populace. I am willing to admit that this leads back to the oldest

comedies, which even introduced gods; as may be seen amongst others in the 'Amphitryon' of Plautus and I know well that Plutarch, when he speaks of Menander does not praise the old comedy very much. It is therefore somewhat difficult to me to approve our fashion. But since we in Spain do so far diverge from art, the learned must keep silent on this point. It is true that the tragic fused with the comic, Seneca mingled with Terence, produces no less a monster than was Pasiphae's 'Minotaur.' But this abnormity pleases, people will not see any other plays but such as are half serious, half ludicrous, nature herself teaches this variety from which she borrows part of her beauty."[1]

It is on account of these last words that I quote this passage. Is it true that nature sets us an example of the common and sublime, the farcical and serious, the merry and sad? It seems so. But if it is true Lope has done more than he intended, he has not only glossed over the faults of his stage, he has really proved that these are no faults, for nothing can be a fault that is an imitation of nature.

[1] "Elígese el sujeto, y no se mire,
(Perdonen los preceptos) si es de Reyes,
Aunque por esto entiendo, que el prudente,
Filipo Rey de España, y Señor nuestro,
En viendo un Rey en ellos se enfadava,
O fuesse el ver, que al arte contradize,
O que la autoridad real no deve
Andar fingida entre la humilde plebe,
Este es bolver á la Comedia antigua,
Donde vemos, que Plauto puso Dioses,
Como en su Anfitrion lo muestra Jupiter,
Sabe Dios, que me pesa de aprovarlo,
Porque Plutarco hablando de Menandro,
No siente bien de la Comedia antigua,
Mas pues del arte vamos tan remotos,
Y en España le hazemos mil agravios,
Cierren los Doctos esta vez los labios.
Lo Trágico, y lo Cómico mezclado
Y Terencio con Seneca, aunque sea,
Como otro Minotauro de Pasife,
Harán grave una parte, otra ridícula
Que aquesta variedad deleyta mucho
Buen ejemplo nos da naturaleza,
Que por tal variedad tiene belleza."

One of our modern writers says,[2] "Shakespeare, of all poets since Homer the one who has known men best, who has looked them through and through with a kind of marvellous intuition, from the king to the beggar, from Julius Cæsar to Jack Falstaff, Shakespeare has been blamed that his plays have a very faulty, irregular or badly devised plot; that comic and tragic are thrown together in the strangest manner; that often the very same person that has called up our tears by his touching language, will a few moments afterwards by a strange fancy, a quaint expression of his emotions, chill us, nay even make us laugh, so that afterwards it is difficult for him to get us back into the mood in which he would have us. People blame this and do not consider that just on this account his plays are such natural representations of human life.

"The life of most people and, if we may say so, the life-course of the bodies politic themselves, in so far as we regard it as so many ethical beings, resembles in so many respects the blood-and-thunder, tragedies ('Haupt- und Staatsactionen') of old Gothic taste, that we could almost imagine the inventors of these had been wiser than we commonly think, and even if they had not the secret intention of making human life ridiculous, had at least intended to imitate nature as faithfully as the Greeks strove to beautify it Not to speak of the accidental resemblance that in these plays, as in life, the most important parts are often played by the worst actors, what can be more alike than the two kinds of blood-and-thunder tragedies, in their plan, in the division and disposition of the scenes in their entanglement and their catastrophe? How rarely do the authors of the one or the other ask themselves why they have made this or that just so and not otherwise; how often do they surprise by events for which we were not in the least prepared. How often do we see persons come, enter and exeunt without comprehending why they came and why they have disappeared again. How much in both is left to chance; how often we see the greatest consequences

[2] [The following quotation is from the 'Agathon' of Wieland.—Tr]

provoked by the most petty causes. How often we see the most serious and important actions treated carelessly and the insignificant treated with absurd gravity. And when at last in both everything is so miserably involved and complicated that we begin to despair of the possibility of disentanglement how happily we suddenly see the Gordian knot, not unravelled it is true, but hewn through by a brave dagger-thrust, or by some god who jumps out of paper clouds amid thunder and lightning. This cutting open comes to the same thing as unravelling, in one way or the other the play has an end, and the spectators can applaud or hiss as they will or may. We know what an important person the noble harlequin represents in our comic tragedies, who it seems is determined to maintain himself on the stage of our metropolis; perhaps as an eternal monument to our ancestors' taste. Would to heaven that his person were alone represented on the theatre. But how many great acts on the theatre of the world have been acted together with, or what is worse, by means of a harlequin. How often has all the wisdom and valour of the very greatest men: men who have been born to be the sheltering genius of the throne, the benefactors of whole peoples and ages, been frustrated by means of some little whimsical, practical joke of a harlequin, or of such who, if they do not wear harlequin's jacket and his yellow hose, certainly bear his whole character. How often in both kinds of tragi-comedy the complication arises from some stupid mischievous act by which harlequin spoils the labour of wise people before they are aware of it."

No. 70.

If in this comparison of the great and small, the original and counterfeit heroic farce, the satirical mood were not so prominent, it could be held to be the best apology for the comi-tragic or tragi-comic drama (mixed plays I have seen them called somewhere), the most conscientious deduction of Lope's thoughts, while at the same time it would confute them. It would prove that just the example of nature which is to justify the combination of solemn gravity with farcical merriment can justify as

well every dramatic monster that has neither plan, nor connexion, nor common-sense Imitation of nature would consequently either be no principle of art, or if it still remain so, it would by means of art cease to be art. At least it would be no higher art than that art which imitates the coloured veins of marble in plaster of Paris; their direction and course may go as they like, the strangest cannot be so strange but that it might seem natural; only that does not seem natural in which too much symmetry, proportion and equality is shown, in which too much is seen of that which in every other art, constitutes art. In this sense the most laboured is the worst, the most arbitrary the best.

Our author might have spoken quite differently as critic. What he here seems to support so elaborately, he would beyond doubt have condemned as a monstrosity of barbarous taste; or at least as the first attempts of an art reviving among an uncultivated people, the form of which has been determined by a combination of some accidental causes or by chance, but in which reason and reflexion have taken little or no part. He would hardly say that the first inventors of mixed plays (since the word is once there, why should I not use it?) "strove to imitate nature as faithfully as the Greeks sought to beautify it."

These words "faithful" and "beautiful," applied to the imitation of nature as the object of imitation, are subject to many misconceptions. There are persons who will not admit of any nature which we can imitate too faithfully, they insist that even what displeases us in nature, pleases us in a faithful imitation, by means of imitation. There are others who regard beautifying nature as a whim; a nature that intends to be more beautiful than nature is just on that account not nature. Both declare themselves to be admirers of the only nature such as she is, the one sees nothing to avoid, the other nothing to add. The former would necessarily admire the Gothic mixed plays, and the latter would find it difficult to take pleasure in the masterpieces of the ancients.

But suppose this were not the consequence? If those persons, great admirers though they are of common everyday nature, should yet declare themselves against the

mixture of the farcical and interesting. If these others, monstrous as they deem everything that desires to be better and more beautiful than nature, can yet wander through the whole Greek theatre without finding the least obstacle on this account, how should we explain this contradiction?

We should necessarily have to retrace our steps and retract that which we insisted on before concerning the two species, but how must we retract without involving ourselves in new difficulties? The comparison of such blood-and-thunder tragedies concerning whose worth we dispute, with human life, with the ordinary course of the world, is still so correct.

I will throw out a few thoughts, which if they are not thorough enough may suggest more thorough ones. My chief thought is this: it is true and yet not true that the comic tragedy of Gothic invention faithfully copied nature. It only imitates it faithfully in one half and entirely neglects the other, it imitates the nature of phenomena without in the least regarding the nature of our feelings and emotions.

In nature everything is connected, everything is interwoven, everything changes with everything, everything merges from one into another. But according to this endless variety it is only a play for an infinite spirit. In order that finite spirits may have their share of this enjoyment, they must have the power to set up arbitrary limits, they must have the power to eliminate and to guide their attention at will.

This power we exercise at all moments of our life, without this power there would be no life for us; from too many various feelings we should feel nothing, we should be the constant prey of present impressions, we should dream without knowing what we dream. The purpose of art is to save us this abstraction in the realms of the beautiful, and to render the fixing of our attention easy to us. All in nature that we might wish to abstract in our thoughts from an object or a combination of various objects, be it in time or in place, art really abstracts for us, and accords us this object or this combination of various objects as purely and tersely as the sensations they are to provoke allow.

If we are witnesses of an important and touching event, and another event of trifling import traverses it, we seek and evade the distractions of our attention thus threatened We abstract from it, and it must needs revolt us to find that again in art which we wished away in nature.

Only if this event in its progress assumes all shades of interest and one does not merely follow upon the other, but of necessity evolves from it, if gravity provokes laughter, sadness pleasure or *vice versâ*, so directly that an abstraction of the one or the other is impossible to us, then only do we not demand it from art and art knows how to draw a profit from this impossibility.

But enough of this, it is evident whither I am tending.

On the forty-fifth evening Romanus's play of 'The Brothers' and St. Foix's 'Oracle' were played.

The former play may pass as a German original, although it is mainly taken from the 'Brothers' of Terence. It has been said that Molière also drew from this source and notably in his 'École des Maris'! M. de Voltaire makes his comments on this fact and I gladly quote M. de Voltaire's comments! Something may be learnt from the most trifling, if not always that what he says therein, at least that which he should have said. "Primus sapientiæ gradus est, falsa intelligere" (I cannot remember at this moment where this adage is written) and I know of no author in the world on whom to try whether we have attained to this first rung of wisdom, so well as on M de Voltaire, and for the same reason I know no other who could less help us to attain the second rung: "secundus vera cognoscere." I think that a critic would best arrange his method according to this adage. First let him search for some one from whom he can differ, he will then gradually approach his subject and the rest will follow of its own accord. I confess that to this end, I have in the present work mainly chosen the French writers', and among these M. de Voltaire especially. Whoever deems this method more superficial than thorough, let him know that even the thorough Aristotle nearly always employed it. "Solet Aristoteles, quærere pugnam in suis libris," says one of his expositors who happens to lie under my hand. "Atque hoc facit non

temere et casu, sed certa ratione atque consilio nam labefactatis aliorum opinionibus," &c. Out upon the pedant! M. de Voltaire would exclaim. Now I am a pedant only from want of self-confidence.

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No. 73.

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On the forty-eighth evening Herr Weiss's tragedy of 'Richard III.' was performed.

This play is unquestionably one of our most important original dramas. It is rich in beauties which sufficiently prove that it would not have been beyond the power of the poet to avoid the faults with which they are intermingled, had he but had sufficient confidence in himself.

Shakespeare had already brought the life and death of the third Richard upon the stage, but Herr Weiss did not recollect this until his own work was already completed. He says: "Although I shall lose much by this comparison, it will at least be found that I have not been guilty of plagiarism. But perhaps it would have been a merit to commit a plagiarism on Shakespeare"

For this end we must suppose such an act to be possible What has been said of Homer, that it would be easier to deprive Hercules of his club, than him of a verse, can be as truly said of Shakespeare. There is an impress upon the least of his beauties which at once exclaims to all the world. I am Shakespeare's—and woe to the foreign beauty who has the self-confidence to place itself beside it?

Shakespeare must be studied, not plundered If we have genius, Shakespeare must be to us what the *camera obscura* is to the landscape-painter He must look into it diligently to learn how nature reflects herself upon a flat surface, but he must not borrow from it

Now in Shakespeare's whole play I do not know one single scene, not even a single speech which Herr Weiss could have used as it stands. Even the smallest portions of Shakespeare are cut according to the great measure of his historical plays, and these stand to the tragedies of French taste much as a large fresco stands to a miniature painting intended to adorn a ring. What material can we then take from the former to use in the latter? Perchance

a face, a single figure, at most a little group, which must then be worked out into a whole. In the same manner single Shakespearian thoughts must become entire scenes, and entire scenes whole acts. For rightly to use a giant's sleeve for the dress of a dwarf, we must not employ it as a sleeve but make a whole coat out of it.

If this is done, then the author may feel quite at ease on the score of plagiarism. Few persons will be able to recognise the wool from which the threads have been spun. Those few who comprehend the art will not betray the maker, for they know that a grain of gold may be wrought so skilfully that the value of the form far surpasses the value of the material.

I, for my part, sincerely deplore that our poet recollected Shakespeare's Richard too late. He might have known him and yet remained as original as he now is; he might have used him without a single borrowed thought convicting him.

Now if the same thing had occurred to me, I should at least have afterwards employed Shakespeare's work as a mirror to wipe from my work all those blemishes which my eye had not been able to perceive immediately. How do I know that Herr Weiss has not done this? And why should he not have done this?

May it not be that what I consider blemishes he holds to be none? And is it not very probable that he is more in the right than I am? I am convinced that in most instances the eye of the artist is more penetrating than that of the most keen-sighted of his observers. Among twenty objections made by the latter, the artist will remember that nineteen of these were made and answered by himself while at work.

Nevertheless he will not be annoyed at hearing them from others also, for he likes his work to be criticised. Whether it be judged profoundly or superficially, justly or unjustly, benevolently or satirically, it is all the same to him. Even the most superficial, the most unjust, the most awkward judgment is of more worth to him than tame admiration. In some form or other he may make use of the former to his advantage; but what is he to do with the latter? He does not like to despise the good honest souls who look up

to him as to something extraordinary, and yet he must shrug his shoulders at them. He is not vain, but he is usually proud, and from mere pride he would ten times rather bear an unmerited censure than unmerited praise.

No. 74.

It is notably Richard's character about which I should like to have the poet's explanation. Aristotle would have rejected it unconditionally. Now as far as Aristotle's authority is concerned I could easily get over that point if I could as easily set aside his reasons.

Aristotle assumes that a tragedy must evoke our terror and pity and from this he infers that the hero must be neither a wholly virtuous nor a wholly vicious man, for by the ill-fortunes of neither can this aim be attained.

If I grant this definition, 'Richard III.' is a tragedy that has missed its aim. If I do not grant it, then I no longer know what a tragedy is.

For Richard III. as represented by Herr Weiss is unquestionably the greatest, most loathsome monster that ever trod the stage. I say the stage, for that the earth ever bore such a monster I greatly doubt.

Now what pity can the destruction of such a monster excite in us? But stay, he is not intended to do this, the poet has not designed this; there are other personages in his work whom he has made the objects of our pity.

Now as to terror? Should not this villain arouse the utmost limits of our terror, a man who has filled up the chasm that separated him from the throne, with the corpses of those who ought to have been to him the dearest in all the world; a bloodthirsty demon who boasts of his blood-thirst and rejoices at his crimes.

Most certainly he awakens our terror, if we understand by terror, amazement at such inconceivable crimes, horror of such wickedness as surpasses our comprehension, if we are to understand by it the shudder that seizes us at the sight of terrible deeds that are executed with glee. Of this terror I experienced my fair share at the performance of 'Richard III.'

But this form of terror is so little one of the aims of

tragedy that the old poets sought by all possible means to diminish it whenever their heroes were compelled to commit some great crime. They preferred rather to blame Fate, to make the crime the inevitable curse of an avenging deity, they preferred to change man from a creature of free-will to a machine, rather than to suffer the horrible idea to linger among us that man could by nature be capable of such corruption.

Crébillon is known among the French as the "Terrible." I greatly fear he is so nicknamed more on account of the terror which ought not to be in tragedy, than on account of the legitimate terror which the philosopher reckons as essential to tragedy.

And this ought not to have been named terror at all. The word which Aristotle uses[1] means fear; fear and pity, he says, should be evoked by tragedy, not pity and terror. It is true that terror is a species of fear, it is a sudden overwhelming fear. But this very suddenness, this surprise which is included in the idea of terror, plainly proves that those who here substituted the word terror for fear, did not comprehend at all what kind of fear Aristotle meant. . . .

Aristotle says: "Pity demands a person who suffers undeserved calamity and fear requires him to be one of ourselves. The villain is neither the one nor the other; hence his misfortunes can excite neither the one nor the other"

Fear has, as I have said, been interpreted as *terror* by our modern translators and expositors, and by this substitution they succeed in picking the strangest quarrel imaginable with the philosopher.

One of this herd speaks thus:[2] "It has not been possible to agree about the explanation of terror, and indeed it contains in every respect a link too many which hampers its universality and limits it. If Aristotle understands by his addition 'one of ourselves' merely the similarity of mankind, merely that both the spectator and the actor are human beings, even supposing that their

[1] In Cap xiii. Poetics.
[2] Herr Schmidt in his preface to 'The Comic Theatre.'

character, worth, and social standing were widely different, this remark was needless since it followed as a matter of course. But if he was of opinion that only virtuous persons, or such as were afflicted by a pardonable fault could excite terror, then he was in the wrong, for reason and experience are opposed to him Terror springs incontestably from our feelings of humanity, for every human being is subject to it and every human being is by means of this feeling touched at the adverse fortunes of another man. It is possible that there may be persons who deny this of themselves, but such a denial would be a renunciation of their natural sensibility and hence a mere boast that springs from perverted principles, but no refutation. Now therefore if a dreadful event should unexpectedly befall even a vicious person who has shortly before engaged our attention, we should immediately forget his vices and see in him merely the human being. The mere aspect of human misery in general makes us sad, and the sudden, sad emotions that would be thus evoked, these are terror."

Quite true, only not rightly placed For what does this prove against Aristotle? Nothing at all. Aristotle does not think of this terror when he speaks of fear which can be excited in us only by the misfortunes of our equals. This terror which seizes us at the sudden sight of a suffering that threatens another, is a compassionate terror and therefore comprehended under the term of pity. Aristotle would not say pity and fear, if under fear he understood nothing more than a mere modification of compassion.

The author of the 'Letters on the Emotions'[3] says "Pity is a complex emotion, composed out of love for an object and displeasure caused by its misery. The movements by which compassion evinces itself are distinguishable from the simple symptoms of love as well as from those of displeasure, for compassion itself is a mere manifestation. But how varied can this manifestation be! Let us change the one limitation of time in a commiserated misfortune, and compassion will be shown by totally different signs. We

[3] Moses Mendelssohn.

feel a compassionate mourning with Electra weeping over her brother's urn, for she thinks the misfortune has taken place and bewails the loss she has sustained. What we feel at the sight of Philoktetes' suffering is likewise compassion, but of a different nature, because the torments sustained by this virtuous man are present and befall him before our eyes. But when Œdipus is terrified at the sudden *dénouement* of the great secret, when Monime is alarmed at seeing the jealous Mithridates grow pale, when virtuous Desdemona is afraid on hearing threatening speech from her Othello who was wont to be so tender, what is it we feel then? Always the same compassion, but compassionate terror, compassionate alarm, compassionate fear. The movements are various, but the essence of the emotion is in all cases the same. For as all love is connected with a willingness to put ourselves in the place of the beloved object, so we must share all kinds of suffering with them, which is very expressively termed compassion. Why then should not fright, terror, rage, jealousy, revenge, in fact all forms of unpleasant emotions, even envy not excepted, spring from compassion? We may see hereby how awkwardly the greater part of the art critics have divided tragic passions into terror and compassion. Terror and compassion! Is then theatrical terror no compassion? For whom does the spectator start when Merope draws the dagger upon her own son? Surely not for himself but for Ægisthus, whose preservation we so sincerely desire, for the deluded queen who regards him as the murderer of her son. But if we only intend to call compassion the displeasure felt at the present misfortunes of another, it will be needful to distinguish from compassion properly so called, not only terror but all other feelings communicated to us by another person."

No. 75.

These ideas are so correct, so clear, so luminous that it seems to us every one might and ought to have had them. Nevertheless I will not attribute the acute observations of the new philosopher to the ancient one; I am too well acquainted with the merits of the doctrine of mixed sensa-

tions enunciated by this modern philosopher and for the true theory of which we are indebted to him alone. But of that which he has explained so excellently Aristotle may have been on the whole sensible, at least it is quite undeniable that Aristotle must either have believed that a tragedy could or should excite nothing but genuine compassion, nothing but displeasure at the present misfortunes of another, which we can hardly suppose, or he must have comprehended under the word compassion all passions in general that can be communicated to us by another.

For it is certainly not Aristotle who has made the division so justly censured of tragic passions into terror and compassion. He has been falsely interpreted, falsely translated. He speaks of pity and *fear*, not of pity and *terror;* and his fear is by no means the fear excited in us by misfortune threatening another person. It is the fear which arises for ourselves from the similarity of our position with that of the sufferer; it is the fear that the calamities pending over the sufferers might also befall ourselves; it is the fear that we ourselves might thus become objects of pity. In a word this fear is compassion referred back to ourselves.

Aristotle always requires to be interpreted through himself. Whoever intends to furnish us with a new commentary to his 'Poetics,' which will distance that of Dacier, him I would advise before all else to read the complete works of the philosopher from beginning to end. He will find explanations of Poetics where he least expects them, most especially must he study the books of Rhetoric and Ethics. Now we imagine that the scholiasts so well versed in the writings of Aristotle would have found these explanations long ago. But his 'Poetics' was the very work of which they took the least notice. Then also they were wanting in other knowledge without which these explanations could not have borne fruit; they were not acquainted either with the theatre or its masterpieces.

The correct explanation of this fear with which Aristotle combines the tragic pity is to be found in the fifth and eighth chapter of the second book of Rhetoric. It would not have been very difficult to have recalled these

chapters and yet not one of his expositors seems to have recollected them, at least not one of them has made that use of them which they afford. For even those who without them perceived that this fear could not be compassionate terror, might yet have learnt an important fact therefrom, namely, the reason why the Stagyrite added fear to compassion, why fear alone and no other passion, and why not several passions. Of this reason they know nothing, and I should like to hear what answer their own intelligence would suggest to them if they were asked, for instance, why tragedy could not and should not excite in us compassion and admiration as well as compassion and fear?

All this depends on the conception Aristotle had of compassion It was his opinion that the misfortune that becomes the object of our compassion must necessarily be of such a nature that we can fear it might happen as well to us or ours. Where this fear is not present compassion does not arise. For neither he whom misfortune has oppressed so heavily that he no longer sees any cause to be afraid of any further ills, nor he who believes himself so fortunate that he cannot comprehend whence any misfortune could befall him, neither the desperate man, nor the arrogant one, are in the habit of feeling compassion for others. Therefore Aristotle explains that which is fearful and that which merits pity by means of one another. All that, he says, is fearful to us, which if it had happened to another, or were to happen to him, would excite our pity;[1] and we find all that worthy of our compassion, which we should fear if it were threatening us. It would not therefore be enough that the unfortunate person who excites our compassion does not deserve his misfortunes; he may have drawn them down upon himself by his own weakness, his tortured innocence or rather his too severely punished guilt would lose their

[1] 'Ὡς δ' ἁπλῶς εἰπεῖν, φοβερά ἐστιν, ὅσα ἐφ' ἑτέρων γινόμενα ἢ μέλλοντα ἐλεεινά ἐστιν. I do not know what came to Æmilius Portus in his edition of the Rhetoric (Spiræ, 1598,) when he rendered thus. "Denique ut simpliciter loquar, formidabilia sunt, quæcunque simulac in aliorum potestatem venerunt, vel ventura sunt" It ought simply to read, "quæcunque aliis evenerunt, vel eventura sunt."

effect upon us, would be incapable of awakening our pity if we saw no possibility that his sufferings might ever befall us But this possibility arises, and becomes the more probable, if the poet does not make him out to be worse than mankind in general, if he lets him think and act as we should have thought and acted in his position, or at least as we might have thought and acted; in short, if he portrays him as one of ourselves. From similarity arises the fear that our destiny might as easily become like his as we feel ourselves to be like him, and this fear it is which would force compassion to full maturity.

Such was Aristotle's conception of compassion, and only thence can the true reason be deduced why next to compassion he only mentioned fear in his definition of tragedy. It is not that this fear is a passion independent of pity, which might be excited now with pity and now without it in the same way as pity can be excited now with and now without fear. This was Corneille's error, but this was not Aristotle's reason; according to his definition of compassion it of necessity included fear, because nothing could excite our compassion which did not at the same time excite our fear.

Corneille had already written all his plays before he sat down to annotate Aristotle's 'Poetics'[2] For more than fifty years he had laboured for the stage and after such experience he might unquestionably have given us much valuable information concerning the ancient dramatic code if he had only studied it a little more diligently during the time of his labour. He appears to have done this only in so far as the mechanical rules of dramatic art were concerned He left essential points disregarded and when he found at the end that he had sinned against Aristotle, which nevertheless he had not wished to do, he endeavoured to absolve himself by means of explanations and caused his pretended master to say things which he never thought.

[2] He says· "Je hasarderai quelque chose sur cinquante ans de travail pour la scène," in his dissertation on Drama. His first play, 'Mélite,' dates from 1625, and his last, 'Surena,' from 1675, which makes exactly fifty years, so that it is certain that in his exposition of Aristotle he was able to have an eye to all his plays.

Corneille had brought martyrs upon the stage and had represented them as the most perfect, blameless beings: he had produced the most loathsome monsters in Prusias, Phocas, and Cleopatra and of both these species Aristotle has maintained they are unsuitable for tragedy, because neither can excite pity nor fear. What does Corneille say to this? How does he manage that neither his own dignity nor the authority of Aristotle has to suffer from such a contradiction?[3]

"We can easily come to terms with Aristotle. We need only presume that he did not mean to maintain that both means, terror and compassion, were required at the same time to effect the purification of our passions, which according to him is the chief aim of tragedy, but that one of these means would be sufficient. We may confirm this explanation from his own works, if we rightly weigh the reasons he gives for the exclusion of such events as he censures in tragedies. He never says this or that is not suited to tragedy because it only excites compassion and no fear, or that such a thing is insupportable because it only excites fear without awakening compassion. On the contrary he rejects them on that account because as he says they neither produce compassion nor fear, and he thus shows us that they displeased him because they lacked both, and that he would not deny them his approval if they affected only one of these."

No. 76.

Now this is utterly false. I cannot marvel enough how Dacier who is usually very observant of the distortions that Corneille practised on Aristotle's text for his own ends could overlook this, the greatest of all. True how could he avoid overlooking it since he never consulted the philosopher's own explanation of compassion? As I have said what Corneille imagines is utterly false. Aristotle cannot have meant this, or we should have to believe that he could forget his own explanation, we should have to believe he could contradict himself in the most flagrant

[3] "Il est aisé de nous accommoder avec Aristote," &c.

manner. If, according to his doctrine, the misfortunes of another which we do not fear for ourselves cannot awaken our pity, he could not be satisfied with any tragedy which excites pity alone and no fear, because he deemed such a matter an impossibility; such actions did not exist for him. He believed that events capable of awakening our compassion, must at the same time awaken our fear, or rather, by means of this fear, they awaken compassion. Still less could he have conceived the action of a tragedy, which might excite our fear without awakening our compassion, for he was convinced that all which excited fear for ourselves must awaken our compassion too as soon as we saw it threaten or befall others, and this is the case in tragedy, where we see all the evils which we fear, happening to others and not to ourselves.

It is true that when Aristotle speaks of the actions that are not suited to tragedy, he several times uses the expression that they excite neither compassion nor fear, but so much the worse for Corneille if he was misled by this *neither*, *nor*. These disjunctive particles do not always express what he makes them express. For if we deny two or more qualities to an object by means of these particles, the existence of the object, notwithstanding that one or the other of the things are wanting to it, depends on whether these things can be separated in nature as we separate them in the abstract and by means of the symbolic expression. For example, if we say of a woman that she is neither handsome nor witty, we certainly mean to say that we should be satisfied if she possessed either of these attributes; for wit and beauty can be separated not only in thought but they are separated in reality. But if we say, this man believes neither in heaven, nor in hell, do we mean to say thereby that we should be satisfied if he believed in one of them, if he only believed in heaven and no hell, or in hell and no heaven? Surely not, for whoever believes the one, must needs believe the other; heaven and hell, punishment and reward are relative terms; if the one exists, so does the other. Or to draw an illustration from an allied art, when we say, this picture is good for nothing, it has neither outline nor colour, do we mean to say by this that a good painting

could exist with either of the two alone? This is very clear.

But how if the definition that Aristotle gives of compassion were false? How if we could feel compassion with evils and misfortunes that we have in no wise to fear for ourselves?

It is true we do not require the element of fear to feel displeasure at the physical sufferings of a person whom we love. This displeasure arises merely from our perception of the imperfection, as our love arises from the perception of the perfections of the individual, and from this fusion of pleasure and displeasure arises the mixed sensation we call compassion.

But granting this I do not believe that I shall be obliged to forsake Aristotle's cause.

For if we can feel compassion for others without fear for ourselves it remains incontestable that our compassion, strengthened by this fear, becomes far more vivid and intense than it would be without it. Then what hinders us from assuming that the mixed sensation evoked by the physical sufferings of a beloved object can alone be elevated to that height where it deserves to be called affection by adding to it the element of fear for ourselves

This was what Aristotle really assumed, he did not regard compassion according to its primary emotions, he regarded it merely as an effect. Without mistaking the former he only denies to the spark the name of flame. Compassionate emotions unaccompanied by fear for ourselves, he designates philanthropy, and he only gives the name of compassion to the stronger emotions of this kind which are connected with fear for ourselves. Now though he maintains that the misfortunes of a villain excite neither our compassion nor our fear, he does not therefore deny that the spectacle could awaken emotion in us. The villain is still a man, a human being who for all his moral imperfections possesses perfections enough to raise the wish in us not to witness his ruin and destruction, and arouses in us an emotion nearly allied to compassion, the elements as it were of compassion. But as I have said Aristotle does not call these emotions allied to compassion, compassion, but philanthropy. He says: "We must not permit a

villain to pass from unfortunate to fortunate circumstances, for nothing can be more untragical; it then has nothing of all that it ought to have, it awakens neither philanthropy, pity, nor fear. Neither must it be an utter villain who passes from happy to unhappy conditions Such an event may indeed excite philanthropy, but neither compassion nor fear." I know of nothing more bold and absurd than the common rendering of the word philanthropy. Its adjective is usually translated into Latin by "hominibus gratum;" into French by "ce qui peut faire quelque plaisir"; and into German by "what may give pleasure" (*was Vergnugen machen kann*). So far as I can discover, only Goulston appears not to have mistaken the philosopher's meaning; he translated φιλάνθρωπον by "quod humanitatis sensu tangat." For under this meaning of philanthropy is comprehended the feeling that even the misfortunes of a criminal can evoke, it is not joy at his merited punishment that is understood, but the sympathetic feeling of humanity which is awakened in us at the moment of his suffering in spite of our consciousness that his sufferings are nothing but his desert. Herr Curtius indeed would limit these compassionate emotions felt for a suffering villain to a certain species of evils. He says: "Those accidents to the vicious which excite neither pity nor fear in us, must be the consequences of their vices; for if they happened to them by chance, or innocently, they still retain in the hearts of the spectators the privileges of humanity which does not deny its compassion to a villain who suffers innocently." But he does not seem sufficiently to have considered this. For even when the misfortune befalling a villain is the immediate consequence of his crimes, we still cannot help suffering with him at the sight of his punishment.

The author of the 'Letters on the Sensations' says. "Behold yonder multitude that crowds around a condemned criminal. They have heard of all the horrors, the vices he has committed, they have detested his wicked course of life, they have probably hated him himself. Now he is dragged pale and fainting to the terrible scaffold. The people press through the crowd, stand on tiptoe, climb the roofs to see how his features

become distorted in death. The verdict is spoken, the hangman approaches, one moment more will decide his destiny. How earnestly do all the hearts now wish him pardoned. What! pardoned? he, the object of their detestation? he, whom a moment before they would themselves have sentenced to death? Whereby has a spark of humanity been rekindled in them? Is it not the close approach of punishment, the sight of the most terrible physical ill that reconciles us again even with this vile wretch and wins him our affection? Without love it would be impossible to have compassion on his fate."

And it is this love, say I, which we can never entirely lose towards our fellow-creatures, which smoulders inextinguishably beneath the ashes by which our stronger emotions are covered, and which only awaits a favourable gust of wind from misfortune, grief and crime to be blown into the flame of compassion; it is this love which Aristotle understands under the name philanthropy. We are right when we comprehend it as included under the name of compassion. But Aristotle was not wrong when he assigned to it a distinct name, to distinguish it from the highest grade of compassionate emotions in which they become affections by the addition of a possible fear for ourselves.

No. 77.

We must here meet an objection. If Aristotle's conception of the effect of compassion was that it was necessarily connected with fear for ourselves, why was it requisite to have mentioned fear by itself? The word compassion includes it already and it would have sufficed if he had merely said, tragedy is to effect the purification of our passions by the excitation of our pity. The addition of the word fear says nothing more and makes that which he says, ambiguous and uncertain.

I reply, if Aristotle had merely intended to teach us which passions tragedy could and should excite, he then could certainly have spared himself the addition of fear and would beyond doubt have done so, for never was there philosopher who so spared words as he did. But he desired to teach us at the same time which of the

passions excited in us by tragedy should be purified and in this intention he was obliged to mention fear separately. For although according to him the sensation of compassion cannot exist either in or out of the theatre without fear for ourselves, although fear is a needful ingredient of compassion yet this does not hold good conversely, and pity for others is no ingredient of fear for ourselves. When once the tragedy is ended, our pity ceases, and nothing remains in us of all the experienced emotions but the possible fear for ourselves which the misfortunes we have pitied have awakened in us. This fear we carry away with us, and as it helps as an ingredient of pity to purify our pity, it now helps to purify itself as a passion capable of independent continuous existence. Consequently to show that it could do this and really does it, Aristotle deemed it necessary to name it separately.

It is incontestable that Aristotle never contemplated giving a sharp logical definition of tragedy, for without limiting himself to its merely essential qualities, he admitted several accidental ones that had become necessary by the customs of his day. But when we deduce these and reduce the other distinctive features, there remains a perfectly accurate definition, namely this, that a tragedy is a poem which excites compassion. According to its genus it is the imitation of an action, like the epopee and comedy, but according to its species, the imitation of an action worthy of compassion. From these two definitions all the rules can be perfectly deduced and even its dramatic form may be determined.

This latter statement may be doubted. At least I know no art critic who ever dreamed of attempting this. They all regard the dramatic form of tragedy as something traditional, which is so nowadays because it is so, and which is left so because it is held to be good. Aristotle alone has penetrated to the cause, but in his explanation he has rather presupposed it than clearly explained it He says "Tragedy is the imitation of an action—which not by the means of narration but by the means of pity and fear effects the purification of these similar passions." It is thus that he expresses himself,

word for word. Who is not struck by this curious antithesis. "not by the means of narrative but by the means of pity and fear." Pity and fear are the means employed by tragedy to attain its end, a narrative can only refer to the manner how to employ or not to employ these ways and means. Does it not seem as if Aristotle had left a hiatus here? Does it not seem as if the proper antithesis of narrative, which here is dramatic form, is lacking? But what is it the translators do with the hiatus? One of them carefully walks round it, the other fills it in, but merely with words None of them see anything further in it than a careless construction of words to which they do not deem it necessary to pay any attention, provided they can render the meaning of the philosopher. Dacier translates *d'une action—qui sans le secours de la narration, par le moyen de la compassion et de la terreur*, &c., and Curtius "of an action which not by the relation of the poet but by the representation of the action itself purifies us from the faults of the represented passions, by means of terror and pity." Very good, both say what Aristotle means to say, only they do not say it *as* he said it. And all depends upon this *as*, for it is not merely a careless construction of words. Briefly the matter stands thus. Aristotle perceived that pity necessarily required a present evil, that evils which happened long ago or threaten in the distant future are not at all commiserated by us or at any rate not as much as present ones and that it was consequently necessary to represent the action which is to arouse our pity not as past but as present—that is to say, not in the narrative but in the dramatic form. This alone that our pity is excited little or not at all by narrative and solely and alone by the actual sight, this justifies him in substituting in his definition the thing itself in place of the form of the thing, because the thing itself is only capable of this form. Had he deemed it possible that our pity could be excited by narration it would indeed have been a very faulty leap, when he said "not by narrative but by pity and fear." But since he was convinced that pity and fear could alone be excited in imitation by means of the dramatic form, he was fully justified in taking this leap

for the sake of brevity. For this I refer to the before-mentioned ninth chapter of the second book of Rhetoric.[1]

Now with reference to the moral aim accorded to tragedy by Aristotle, and which he deemed needful to include in his definition, it is well known what controversy has been occasioned by it, especially in modern times.

I venture to undertake to prove that all who have declared themselves against it have not understood Aristotle. They have all substituted their own ideas for his before they knew for certain what they were They quarrel about whims, which they create themselves, and imagine they have indisputably confuted the philosopher when they have merely confuted the cobwebs of their own brains. I cannot enter just now into a more detailed discussion of this matter, only in order that I may not appear to speak without proof, I will make two observations:—

1. They make Aristotle say "tragedy is to purify us by means of terror and pity from the faults of the passions represented" The passions represented? Then I suppose if the hero is rendered unhappy by curiosity and ambition, by love or anger, it is our curiosity, our ambition, our love, our anger, that tragedy is meant to purify? This never entered Aristotle's mind; in this manner these gentlemen have good fighting ground; their imagination changes windmills into giants, they tilt towards them in the sudden hope of victory, and pay no attention to Sancho who has nothing further than sound common-sense, and ambling on his peaceable animal calls after them not to be in such a hurry and just open their eyes a little. *Τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων* says Aristotle, and that does not mean the represented passions; they ought to have translated this by "these and such like," or by the awakened passions. This *τοιούτων* refers only to the preceding pity and fear; tragedy should excite our pity and fear to purify these and such like passions, but not all passions without distinction. But he says *τοιούτων* and not *τούτων*, these and such like, and not only these, to show

[1] *Ἐπεὶ δ' ἐγγὺς φαινόμενα τὰ πάθη, ἐλεεινά εἰσι, τὰ δὲ μυριοστὸν ἔτος γενόμενα, ἢ ἐσόμενα, οὔτ' ἐλπίζοντες, οὔτε μεμνημένοι, ἢ ὅλως οὐκ ἐλέουσιν ἢ οὐχ ὁμοίως, ἀνάγκη τοὺς συναπεργαζομένους σχήμασι καὶ φωναῖς καὶ ἐσθῆτι, καὶ ὅλως τῇ ὑποκρίσει, ἐλεεινοτέρους εἶναι*

that he comprehended by pity not merely pity properly so called but all philanthropic emotions in general, and by fear not merely the displeasure at pending evil, but every kind of displeasure related to it, thus the displeasure experienced from a past evil as well as from a present one, sorrow and grief In this large compass the pity and fear excited by tragedy is to purify our pity and fear, but only these and no other passions Beyond doubt tragedy may furnish other useful lessons and examples besides these, and purify other passions, but these are not its aim, these it has in common with the epopee and comedy, in so far as it is a poem, the imitation of an action in general, but not in so far as it is a tragedy, the imitation of an action worthy of pity All species of poetry are intended to improve us; it is sad that it should be necessary to have to prove this, still sadder that there are poets who even doubt it. But all species of poetry cannot improve all things, at least not everyone as perfectly as another, but what each can improve most perfectly, and better than any other species —that alone is its peculiar aim.

No 78.

2 As the adversaries of Aristotle paid no attention to what kind of passions he meant to purify in us by the means of pity and fear in tragedy, it was very natural that they should be in error as to the purification itself. At the close of his Politics, when Aristotle is speaking of the purification of passions by means of music he promises to treat of this purification in detail in his Poetics. Corneille says, "Because we find nothing at all about this matter in the Poetics the greater part of his commentators have conceived the idea that it has not come down to us complete." What, nothing at all about this? I, for my part, believe that I have found among that which remains to us of his Poetics it may be much or little, but any way all that he deemed necessary to say about this matter to any one not wholly unacquainted with his philosophy. Corneille himself observed one passage which according to him afforded sufficient light to discover the means by which the purification

of the passions was effected in tragedy, that namely where Aristotle says "pity demands one who suffers undeservedly, and fear one of ourselves." This passage is truly very important, only Corneille has employed it erroneously He could hardly do otherwise, because he had got his head full of the purification of passions in general. "Pity for the misfortunes which we see befalling one of ourselves awakens fear in us lest a similar misfortune befall us; this fear awakens the desire to avoid it and this desire an endeavour to moderate, to improve, even to exterminate the passion, by means of which the person is suffering whose misfortunes we pity, for reason tells every one that we must cast off the cause if we wish to avoid the effect." Now this mode of reasoning makes fear a mere tool by means of which pity effects the purification of the passion. This is false and cannot possibly have been Aristotle's meaning, because tragedy could then purify all the passions, not only those two that Aristotle expressly desired to see purified by it. It might purify our anger, our curiosity, our envy, our ambition, our hatred, and our love, just as it is the one or the other passion by means of which have arisen the misfortunes of the commiserated person. but our pity and fear we should have to leave unpurified. Pity and fear are those passions which we, not the acting personages, feel in tragedy, they are those passions through which the acting personages touch us, not those which draw upon them their own misfortunes. There might be a play in which they both exist. But as yet I know no play, in which the commiserated person has been plunged into misfortune by the means of misconceived pity and misconceived fear. Nevertheless such a work would be the only one in which that happens which Aristotle desires according to Corneille, and even in this it would not happen according to the method he demands. This single play would be, as it were, the point at which two inclined straight lines meet, never to touch again in all eternity. Even Dacier could not so grossly misinterpret Aristotle. He was obliged to be more attentive to his author's words, and these say too positively that our pity and fear are purified by the pity and fear of tragedy. Since he believed however that the benefits of tragedy would be too small if it was merely

Has he in any way asserted more than that pity purifies our passions? Certainly not, and this is scarcely the fourth part of Aristotle's demand, for when Aristotle maintains that tragedy excites pity and fear to purify pity and fear, who does not see that this comprehends far more than Dacier has deemed good to explain? For according to the different combinations of these conceptions he who would exhaust Aristotle must prove separately—1. How tragic pity purifies our pity. 2. How tragic fear purifies our fear. 3. How tragic pity purifies our fear. 4. How tragic fear purifies our pity. Dacier rested at the third point only and he only explained this badly and partially. For whoever has endeavoured to arrive at a just and complete conception of Aristotle's doctrine of the purification of the passions will find that each of these four points includes in it a double contingency, namely, since (to put it briefly) this purification rests in nothing else than in the transformation of passions into virtuous habits, and since according to our philosopher each virtue has two extremes between which it rests, it follows that if tragedy is to change our pity into virtue it must also be able to purify us from the two extremes of pity, and the same is to be understood of fear. Tragic pity must not only purify the soul of him who has too much pity, but also of him who has too little; tragic fear must not alone purify the soul of him who does not fear any manner of misfortune but also of him who is terrified by every misfortune, even the most distant and most improbable. Likewise tragic pity in regard to fear must steer between this too much and too little, and conversely tragic fear in regard to pity Dacier as I have said has only shown how tragic pity may moderate excessive fear but not how its entire absence may be remedied, nor how it may wholesomely increase fear in him who has too little, not to mention that of the rest he has shown nothing at all. Those who followed after him have not in the least supplied what he has left undone. But in order to set at rest the contest about the utility of tragedy according to their opinion they have drawn matters into it which belong to poetry in general but in no wise to tragedy as tragedy in particular; for instance tragedy is intended to nourish

It may perhaps be said; agreed, we will give up Richard; true the play is called after him but he is not on that account the hero. nor the person through whose means the purposes of tragedy are to be attained. he is only to be the means of exciting our pity for others. do not the queen, Elizabeth. the princes excite this pity?

To avoid all verbal disputes, I say yes. But what strange. harsh sensation is it that has mixed itself up with my pity for these persons; what is it that makes me wish I could spare myself this pity? I do not generally wish this with tragic pity—I linger over it willingly and thank the poet for this sweet torture.

Aristotle has well said it and it will certainly be true, he speaks of a *μιαρόν* of something terrible, which we experience at sight of misfortunes of wholly good. wholly innocent persons; and are not the queen. Elizabeth and the princes such persons? What have they done? How have they drawn it down upon themselves that they are in the clutches of this monster? Is it their fault that they have a better right to the throne than he? How about the little moaning victims who can scarcely distinguish right from left: who will deny that they deserve our whole sorrow? But is this sorrow that causes me to think with a shudder of the destiny of these people, with a shudder to which a murmur against Providence is added which is followed afar by despair, is this sorrow? I will not ask—pity? but call it as we may. is it that meant to be excited by an imitative art?

Let no one say history evokes it, that it is founded upon something that really occurred. That really occurred? Granted; then it has its good reason in the eternal and infinite connexion of all things. In this connexion all is wisdom and goodness which appears to us blind fate and cruelty in the few links picked out by the poet. Out of these few links he ought to make a whole, rounded in itself, that is fully explained out of itself, where no difficulty arises, a solution of which is not found in his plan and which we are therefore forced to seek outside of it in the general plan of all things. The whole of this earthly creator should be a mere outline of the whole of the eternal Creator, should accustom us to the thought that

as in Him all things are resolved for the best so also it will be here; and the poet forgets his most noble calling when he forces into a narrow circle the incomprehensible ways of Providence and advisedly awakens our shudder thereat. O spare us ye that have our hearts in your power! To what end these sad emotions?—to teach us submission? Cool reason alone could teach us this and if the teachings of reason are to have any hold on us, if we for all our submission are to retain confidence and joyful courage, it is most necessary that we should be reminded as little as possible of the perplexing instances of such unmerited terrible fates. Away with them from the stage, away with them if it might be from all books. Now if not one of the personages in Richard possesses the necessary qualities which they ought to have were this work a real tragedy, how has it nevertheless come to be considered an interesting play by our public? If it excites neither pity nor fear, what does it effect? It must produce some effect, and it does, and if it does produce an effect, is it not indifferent whether it produces this kind or that? If it occupies the spectators, if it amuses them what more do we want? Must they needs be amused and occupied according to the rules of Aristotle?

This does not sound unreasonable but there is an answer to it. Even if 'Richard' is no tragedy, it remains a dramatic poem, even if it lacks the beauties of tragedy it may yet have other beauties: poetical expressions, metaphors, tirades, bold sentiments, the spirited dialogue, fortunate situations for the actor to display the whole compass of his voice, the whole strength of his pantomimic art, &c.

Of these beauties 'Richard' has many, and also has some others that are more nearly related to the genuine beauties of tragedy.

Richard is an abominable villain, but even the exercise of our disgust, especially upon imitation, is not wholly without its pleasures. Even the monstrous in crime participates in the emotions awakened in us by sublimity and audacity; everything that Richard does is horrible, but all these horrors are committed for a purpose. Richard has a plan, and wherever we perceive a plan our curiosity

is excited and we willingly wait to see whether and how it will be executed; we so love anything that has an aim that it affords us pleasure quite regardless of the morality of this aim.

We wish that Richard should attain his aim and we wish that he should not attain it. If he attains it, we are spared displeasure at means uselessly employed, if he does not attain it, then so much blood has been shed in vain, and since it has once been shed we would rather it had not been shed for the sake of pastime. On the other hand this attainment would be the triumph of malignity and there is nothing we less like to hear. The aim interested us as an aim to be attained but as soon as it is attained we only see in it all its abominable features and we wish it had not been attained. This wish we foresee and we shudder at the accomplishment of his aim.

We love the good personages of the play, such a tender vivacious mother, sisters and brothers who live for each other; such objects always please us, always excite our sweetest and most sympathetic emotions wherever we encounter them. To see them suffering innocently is harsh and not adapted to awaken emotions conducive to our peace and improvement, but still it does evoke emotions.

Thus the play occupies us throughout and pleases us by this occupation of our mental powers. This is true, only the inference is not true that is thought to be drawn from it, namely, that we should therefore be satisfied with the play.

The poet may have done much and yet have accomplished nothing. It is not enough that his work has an effect upon us, it must have that effect upon us which belongs to its species, and it must have that above all others. The lack of that can be in no wise replaced by other effects, especially if the species is of that importance, value and difficulty that all trouble and exertions would be in vain if it produced nothing but such effects as could be attained by an easier species requiring less preparation. We must not set machines in motion to raise a bundle of straw; I must not blast what I can turn over with my foot; I must not set fire to a funeral pile in order to burn a gnat

No. 80.

To what end the hard work of dramatic form? Why build a theatre, disguise men and women, torture their memories, invite the whole town to assemble at one place if I intend to produce nothing more with my work and its representation, than some of those emotions that would be produced as well by any good story that every one could read by his chimney-corner at home?

The dramatic form is the only one by which pity and fear can be excited, at least in no other form can these passions be excited to such a degree. Nevertheless it is preferred to excite all others rather than these;—nevertheless it is preferred to employ it for any purpose but this, for which it is so especially adapted

The public will put up with it; this is well, and yet not well. One has no special longing for the board at which one always has to put up with something.

It is well known how intent the Greek and Roman people were upon their theatres; especially the former on their tragic spectacles. Compared with this, how indifferent, how cold is our people towards the theatre! Whence this difference if it does not arise from the fact that the Greeks felt themselves animated by their stage with such intense, such extraordinary emotions, that they could hardly await the moment to experience them again and again, whereas we are conscious of such weak impressions from our stage that we rarely deem it worth time and money to attain them We most of us go to the theatre from idle curiosity, from fashion, from ennui, to see people, from desire to see and be seen, and only a few, and those few very seldom, go from any other motive

I say we, our people, our stage, but I do not mean the Germans only We Germans confess openly enough that we do not as yet possess a theatre What many of our critics who join in this confession and are great admirers of the French theatre think when they make it I cannot say, but I know well what I think. I think that not alone we Germans, but also that those who boast of having had a theatre for a hundred years, ay, who boast of having the best theatre in all Europe, even the

French have as yet no theatre, certainly no tragic one. The impressions produced by French tragedy are so shallow, so cold.—Let us hear a Frenchman himself speak of them

M. de Voltaire says. "Combined with the surpassing beauties of our theatre is connected a hidden fault which remained unobserved because the public of its own accord could have no higher ideas than those imparted to it by the models of the great masters Only Saint-Evremond has discovered this fault, he says that our dramatic works do not make sufficient impression, that that which should excite our pity only awakens tenderness, that emotion takes the place of agitation, and surprise the place of fear, in short, that our impressions do not penetrate deeply enough It cannot be denied that Saint-Evremond has put his finger to the secret sore of the French theatre. Let no one rejoin that Saint-Evremond is the author of a miserable comedy, 'Sir Politic Wouldbe,' and of another equally miserable one called 'The Operas'; that his small social poems are the shallowest and commonest we possess of this kind, that he is nothing but a poetaster, one may have no spark of genius and yet possess much wit and taste. His taste was unquestionably very subtle, since he accurately hit the cause why most of our plays are weak and cold; we have always lacked a degree of warmth, but we possess everything else" Which means we possessed everything only not that which we ought to have had, our tragedies were excellent, only they were no tragedies How was it that they were none? Voltaire continues "This coldness, this monotonous weakness arose in part from the petty spirit of gallantry that reigned at that time among our courtiers and transformed tragedy into a succession of amorous conversations after the taste of Cyrus and Clelie. The plays that may be excepted therefrom consisted of long political reasonings such as have spoilt Sertorius, made Otho cold and Surena and Attila wretched. There was yet another cause that kept back high pathos from our stage and prevented the action from becoming truly tragic, and that was the narrow miserable theatre with its poor scenery. What could be done on a few dozen boards that were besides filled with

spectators! How could the eyes of the spectators be bribed and enchained, deceived by any display of pomp, by any artifice? What great tragic action could be performed there? What liberty could the imagination of the poet have there? The plays had to consist of long narratives and they thus became rather dialogues than plays. Every actor wished to shine in a long monologue and every play that did not contain these was rejected. In this form all theatrical action, the great expressions of passion fell away, there were no powerful pictures of human misery, all traits of the terrible that could penetrate to the innermost soul were absent, the heart was scarcely touched instead of being torn."

The first cause alleged is very true; gallantry and politics always leave us cold, and as yet no poet in the world has succeeded in combining with them the excitation of pity and fear. The former only exhibits the *fat* or the schoolmaster, the latter requires that we should have nothing but the human being.

But the second cause, how about that? is it possible that the want of a large theatre and good scenery should have such an influence on the genius of the poet? Is it true that every tragic action demands pomp and display; ought not the poet rather so to arrange his play, that it can produce its full effect without these appendages?

It certainly ought to do so, according to Aristotle. The philosopher says. "Pity and fear may be excited by vision, they may also be produced by the connexion of the events themselves, the latter plan is more excellent and after the manner of the best poets. The fable must be so arranged that it must excite pity and fear in him who merely listens to the relation of its events, such is the fable of 'Œdipus' that only requires to be heard to produce this effect. To attain this aim by the organs of sight requires far less art and is the business of those who have undertaken the business of the representation of the play."

Shakespeare's plays are said to afford a curious proof how needless are scenic decorations. We are asked what plays could more need the whole art of the decorator than these with their constant interruptions and change of scene;

yet there was a time when the stages on which they were performed consisted of nothing but a curtain of poor coarse stuff which when it was drawn up showed either the walls bare or else hung with matting or tapestry. Here was nothing for the imagination, nothing to assist the comprehension of the spectator or to help the actor and yet it is said, that notwithstanding, Shakespeare's plays were at that time more intelligible without scenery than they became afterwards with it.[1]

If therefore the poet need take no notice of decorations, if the decorations may be omitted even where they appear necessary without any disadvantage to his play, why should the narrow miserable theatre be the reason that the French poets have furnished us with no touching plays? Not so, this was not the cause, the cause lay in themselves.

And experience has proved this. Nowadays the French have a beautiful roomy stage, no spectators are tolerated on it, the *coulisses* are empty, the scene-painter has a free field; he paints and builds all the poet requires of him, yet where are they now, those warmer plays which they have attained since? Does M. de Voltaire flatter himself that his 'Semiramis' is such a play? It contains pomp and decoration enough; a ghost into the bargain, and yet I know no chillier play than his 'Semiramis.'

No. 81.

Now do I mean to assert by all this that no Frenchman is capable of writing a really touching tragical play; that the volatile spirit of the nation is unable to grapple with

[1] Cibber's 'Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland,' vol. ii. pp. 78, 79: "Some have insinuated that fine scenes proved the ruin of acting. In the reign of Charles I. there was nothing more than a curtain of very coarse stuff, upon the drawing up of which the stage appeared, either with bare walls on the sides, coarsely matted, or covered with tapestry; so that for the place originally represented, and all the successive changes in which the poets of those times freely indulged themselves, there was nothing to help the spectator's understanding, or to assist the actor's performance, but bare imagination. The spirit and judgment of the actors supplied all deficiencies and made, as some would insinuate, plays more intelligible without scenes than they afterwards were with them."

such a task? I should be ashamed of myself if I had even thought this. Germany has not as yet made herself ridiculous by any Bouhours and I, for my part, have not the least inclination towards the part. I am convinced that no people in the world have been specially endowed with any mental gift superior to that of any other people. It is true we say the meditative Englishman, the witty Frenchman. But who made this distinction? Certainly not nature, who divided all things equally among all. There are as many witty Englishmen as Frenchmen and as many meditative Frenchmen as meditative Englishmen, while the bulk of the people is neither one nor the other. What then do I mean? I mean to say that the French might very well have what as yet they have not got, a true tragedy, and why have they not got it? Voltaire ought to have known himself very much better if he meant to alight on the reason.

I mean they have not got it because they deem they have had it for a long time; in this belief they are certainly confirmed by something they possess beyond all other nations, by their vanity, but this is no gift of nature. Nations are like individuals; in his youth Gottsched was deemed a poet, because in those days, it was not known how to distinguish between the poetaster and the poet. By-and-by philosophy and criticism explained this difference and if Gottsched had but kept pace with this century, if his opinion and his taste had been enlarged and purified together with the opinion and taste of his age, he might perhaps from a poetaster have become a poet. But since he had so often heard himself called the greatest poet, since his vanity persuaded him that this was so, he remained what he was It was impossible for him to attain what he believed he already possessed and the older he grew the more obstinately and unblushingly he maintained himself in this fancied possession.

It seems to me the same thing has happened with the French. Scarcely had Corneille torn their theatre a little from the state of barbarism, than they already believed themselves quite close to perfection. They

deemed that Racine had given it the finishing touch and after this no one questioned (which indeed they never had done) whether the tragic poet could not be yet more pathetic, more touching, than Corneille and Racine. It was taken for granted that this was impossible, and all the emulation of the successive poets was limited to the endeavour to be as like as possible to the one or the other. For a hundred years they have thus deceived themselves and in part their neighbours Now let some one come and tell them this and see what they will reply.

Of the two it is Corneille who has done the greatest harm and exercised the most pernicious influence on these tragedians. Racine only seduced by his example, Corneille by his examples and doctrines together, the latter especially, which were accepted as oracles by the whole nation (excepting one or two pedants, a Hedelin, a Dacier who however did not know themselves what they desired) and followed by all succeeding poets. I would venture to prove bit by bit that these doctrines could produce nothing but the most shallow, vapid and untragical stuff.

The rules of Aristotle are all calculated to produce the greatest tragic effect. What does Corneille do with them? He brings them forward falsely and inaccurately and because he still finds them too severe, he endeavours with one and the other to introduce *quelques modérations, quelques favorables interprétations* and thus weakens and disfigures, misinterprets and frustrates every rule, and why? *pour n'être pas obligé de condamner beaucoup de poemes que nous avons vu réussir sur nos théâtres*; an excellent reason!

I will rapidly mention the chief points, some of them I have touched on already but for the sake of connexion I must mention them again.

1. Aristotle says tragedy is to excite pity and fear, Corneille says oh, yes, but as it happens, both together are not always necessary, we can be contented with one of them, now pity without fear, another time fear without pity. Else where should I be, I the great Corneille with my Rodrigue and my Chimène? These good children awaken pity, very great pity, but scarcely fear. And again where should I be with my Cleopatra, my Prusias, and my Phocas? Who can have pity on these wretches? but

they create fear. So Corneille believed and the French believed it after him.

2. Aristotle says tragedy should excite pity and fear, both, be it understood, by means of one and the same person Corneille says. if it so happens very good. It is not however absolutely necessary and we may employ two different persons to produce these two sensations as I have done in my 'Rodogune.' This is what Corneille did and the French do after him

3. Aristotle says by means of the pity and fear excited in us by tragedy our pity and our fear and all that is connected with them are to be purified. Corneille knows nothing of all this and imagines that Aristotle wished to say tragedy excites our pity in order to awaken our fear, in order to purify by this fear the passions which had drawn down misfortunes upon the person we commiserate. I will say nothing of the value of this aim, enough that it is not Aristotle's and that since Corneille gave to his tragedies quite another aim they necessarily became works totally different from those whence Aristotle had abstracted his theories, they needs became tragedies which were no true tragedies And such not only his but all French tragedies became because their authors did not think of the aim of Aristotle, but the aim of Corneille I have already said that Dacier wished to unite both aims, but even this mere union would have weakened the former and tragedy would have remained beneath its highest effect: added to this Dacier, as I have shown, had only a very imperfect conception of the former and it was no wonder if he therefore imagined that the French tragedies of his age rather attained the former than the latter aim He says ('Poét. d'Arist.' chap 6th, rem 8) "Notre tragédie peut réussir assez dans la première partie, c'est-à-dire qu'elle peut exciter et purger la terreur et la compassion. Mais elle parvient rarement à la dernière, qui est pourtant la plus utile, elle purge peu les autres passions, ou comme elle roule ordinairement sur des intrigues d'amour, si elle en purgeoit quelqu'une, ce seroit celle-là seule, et par là il est aisé de voir qu'elle ne fait que peu de fruit" Now the truth is exactly the contrary. We could sooner find French tragedies which satisfied the latter intention than the former. I know several

French plays which distinctly represent the ill-consequences of some passion from which we may draw many good lessons regarding this passion. But I know none that excite my pity in the degree in which tragedy should excite it, while I certainly know various Greek and English plays which can excite it. Various French plays are very clever, instructive works, which I think worthy of all praise, only they are not tragedies. Their authors could not be otherwise than of good intellect; in part they take no mean rank among poets, only they are not tragic poets, only their Corneille and Racine, their Crébillon and Voltaire have little or nothing of that which makes Sophokles Sophokles, Euripides Euripides, Shakespeare Shakespeare. These latter are rarely in opposition to Aristotle's essential demands, the former are so constantly. For to proceed—

No. 82.

4. Aristotle says we must not let any perfect man suffer in a tragedy without any fault on his part, for this is too terrible. Very true, says Corneille. "Such an event awakens more displeasure and hatred against him who has caused these sufferings than pity for him whom they befall. The former sensation therefore, which is not to be the real aim of tragedy, could stifle the latter if it were not treated skilfully. The spectator would depart discontented because too much anger would be mixed with this pity, while he would have been pleased if his pity alone had been excited." "But," says Corneille; for with a but he must come hobbling after, "if this cause falls away if the poem is so arranged that the virtuous man who suffers excites more pity for himself than displeasure against him who makes him suffer, what then? Oh, then," says Corneille "*J'estime qu'il ne faut point faire de difficulté d'exposer sur la scène des hommes très-vertueux.*" I cannot understand how any one could talk such nonsense against a philosopher, how one can pretend to understand him by letting him say things of which he never thought. Aristotle says the wholly unmerited misfortune of a virtuous man is no matter for a tragedy, because it is terrible. Out of this "because" Corneille twists an "in so far" a mere condition

under which it ceases to be tragic. Aristotle says: It is entirely terrible and on that account untragical. Corneille says it is untragical in so far as it is terrible. Aristotle sees the terrible in the misfortune itself, Corneille sees it in the displeasure we feel against its author, he does not or will not see that this terrible is something quite different from this displeasure, that even if the latter were quite removed the former might yet exist in full measure. It is enough for him that by this *quid pro quo* sundry of his plays seem justified which he pretends to have made so little contrary to the rules of Aristotle that he is even arrogant enough to suppose that such pieces had only been lacking to Aristotle for him to model his doctrines according to them and to abstract from them the manner in which the misfortune of a wholly virtuous man may nevertheless become an object of tragedy. He says "En voici deux ou trois manières, que peut-être Aristote n'a su prévoir, parce qu'on n'en voyait pas d'exemples sur les théâtres de son temps." By whom are these examples? By whom else but by himself? and which are these two or three forms? We shall soon see. He says "The first form is when a very virtuous man is persecuted by a very vicious one, but escapes the danger in which the vicious one is himself entrapped, as is the case in 'Rodogune' and 'Heraclius' where it would be quite intolerable if in the first play Antiochus and Rodogune and in the second Heraclius, Pulcheria and Martian had perished, while Cleopatra and Phokas had triumphed. Misfortunes of the former awaken pity, which is not stifled by the abhorrence we feel for their persecutors, because we incessantly hope that some lucky chance will occur that will save them." Let Corneille persuade whom he can that Aristotle did not know this form; he knew it so well that if he did not wholly reject it, he at least emphatically declared it to be more fitted for comedy than tragedy. How was it possible that Corneille could forget this? But it happens thus to all who assume beforehand that their cause is the cause of truth. Now in fact this form does not really belong to the case in question. For according to this the virtuous man does not become unhappy but only finds himself on the road to misfortune which may

excite compassionate anxiety for him without being terrible. Now as to the second form Corneille says: "It may also happen that a very virtuous man is persecuted and killed by command of another who is not sufficiently vicious to incur our whole displeasure, since he may display more weakness than wickedness in his persecution of the virtuous man. When Felix lets his son-in-law Polyeucte perish, it is not from excessive zeal against the Christians, which would render him worthy of detestation, but rather from servile fear, which makes him afraid of saving him in the presence of Severus, of whose hatred and revenge he stands in awe. We therefore feel some displeasure against Felix and blame his conduct, but this displeasure does not outweigh the pity which we feel for Polyeucte and does not hinder him at the end of the play from regaining the good graces of the spectators by his marvellous conversion." I fancy tragic bunglers existed at all times and even at Athens. Why then should Aristotle have been in want of a play of similar construction in order to become as enlightened as Corneille? This is folly! Nervous, weak, undecided characters like Felix are but another fault in plays of this stamp, and contribute to render them both cold and repellent without on the other hand making them less terrible. For as I said before, the terrible does not consist in the displeasure or disgust that they awaken, but in the misfortune itself that befalls the innocent, regardless whether their persecutors are wicked or weak; whether they have treated them thus cruelly with or without intention. The mere thought itself is so terrible that there should be human beings who can be wretched without any guilt of their own. The heathens endeavoured to keep this terrible thought as far away from them as possible, and *we* should nourish it? *we* should take pleasure in spectacles that confirm it; *we*, whom religion and reason should have convinced that it is as false as it is blasphemous. The same would have certainly held good of the third form even if Corneille himself had not forgotten to state which this is.

5. Corneille has amendments to make even to that which Aristotle says regarding the unfitness of an utter villain, whose misfortunes can excite neither pity nor fear, to be a

hero of tragedy. He admits that he cannot excite pity but he certainly can fear. For although none among the spectators should deem themselves capable of such vices and consequently need not fear a similar fate, yet each one may harbour in himself some imperfection allied to these vices and be on his guard against them by means of the fear of proportionate, if not of the same, unhappy consequences. Now this is founded on the false conception which Corneille had of fear and of the purification of the passions to be awakened in tragedy. It contradicts itself. For I have already shown that the excitation of pity is inseparable from the excitation of fear, and if it were possible that the villain could excite our fear he must necessarily excite our pity. Since Corneille himself admits that he cannot do this, therefore he cannot do the other, and he therefore remains quite unfit to attain the aim of tragedy Aristotle indeed considers the villain as yet more unfitted for this than the perfect man, for he expressly demands that if a hero of mediocre kind cannot be found he should be chosen rather better than worse. The reason is evident, a man can be very good and yet possess more than one fault, by means of which he throws himself into an immeasurable misfortune, and excites our pity and sorrow without being in the least terrible, because it is the natural consequence of his errors What Dubos[1] says of them as of villains in tragedy is not what Corneille desires Dubos would permit them in inferior parts only, would only use them as tools to make the chief personages less guilty, would use them as foils. Corneille demands that the principal interest should centre in them as in his 'Rodogune' and it is this which sins against the intention of tragedy. Dubos observes very justly that the misfortune of an inferior villain makes no impression on us. We hardly notice the death of Narcissus in 'Britannicus' On this account therefore the poet should avoid employing them as much as possible. For if their misfortunes do not effectually forward the aims of tragedy, if they are merely secondary means by which the poet endeavours to effect his aim the better with other

[1] Reflexions crit T. I sect xv

persons, it is incontestable that his play would be better still if he could produce the same effect without them The more simple a machine, the less springs and wheels and weights it has, the more perfect it is.

No. 83.

6. Finally. to speak of the misconception of the first and most important quality demanded by Aristotle with regard to the morals of the tragic personages. These should be good. Good? says Corneille "If good here means the same as virtuous, then it will fare badly with the greater part of the ancient and modern tragedies, for they abound in wicked and villainous persons, or at least in such as are affected by weakness that cannot subsist beside virtue." Corneille is especially solicitous for his Cleopatra in 'Rodogune.' He will by no means allow the goodness demanded by Aristotle to pass for moral goodness. It must be another sort of goodness that agrees with moral badness, as well as with moral goodness. Nevertheless, Aristotle meant nothing but moral goodness, only he made a distinction between virtuous persons and persons who displayed virtuous morals under certain circumstances In short Corneille connects a false idea with the word morals and what the proæresis is by means of which—according to our philosopher—free actions become good or bad morals, he has not understood. I cannot just now enter into a detailed proof of my assertion, which can only be done satisfactorily by means of the connexion and the syllogistic sequence of all the ideas of the Greek critic I therefore postpone it for another opportunity, the rather as in the present instance it is necessary to show what an unlucky *détour* Corneille took when he missed the right road, this *détour*, this expedient resulted in this; that Aristotle had understood under goodness of morals the brilliant and elevated character of some virtuous or criminal habit such as might properly and suitably belong to the person who was introduced ("le caractère brillant et élevé d'une habitude vertueuse ou criminelle, selon qu'elle est propre et convenable à la personne qu'on introduit"). He says, "Cleopatra in 'Rodogune' is

extremely wicked, there is no murder from which she shrinks if only she can maintain herself upon the throne, which she prefers to all else in the world, so intense is her love of dominion. But all her crimes are connected with a certain grandeur of soul which has in it something so elevated that while we condemn her actions, we must still admire the source whence they flow. I venture to say the same of the Liar. Lying is unquestionably a vicious habit, but Dorante utters his lies with such presence of mind, such vivacity that the imperfection suits him extremely well and the spectator is bound to confess that though the art of lying thus may be a vice yet no blockhead would be capable of it." In very truth Corneille could not have had a more pernicious idea; if we carry it out there is an end to all truth, and all delusion, to all moral benefit of tragedy. For virtue which is always modest and simple, becomes vain and romantic by assuming this brilliant character, while vice thus varnished will dazzle us from whatever point of view we regard it. What folly to desire to deter by the unhappy consequences of vice if we conceal its inner ugliness! The consequences are accidental, and experience teaches that they are as often fortunate as unfortunate. This refers to the purification of the passions as conceived by Corneille. As I conceive it, as Aristotle taught it, it can by no means be connected with this deceptive splendour. The false foil thus laid beneath vice makes me recognise perfections where there are none, makes me have pity where I should have none. It is true Dacier had already contradicted this explanation, but on untenable reasons, and those which he accepted together with Père Le Bossu were almost equally detrimental to the plays, at least to their poetical perfection. He maintains that "the morals should be good" means nothing more than "well expressed," "qu'elles soient bien marquées." This is certainly a rule which rightly comprehended deserves in its proper place the whole attention of the dramatic poet. If only our French models did not prove too clearly that "well expressed" has been mistaken for "strongly expressed." The expression has been over-charged, pressure has been put upon pressure until at last the personages

characterised have become personified characters and vicious or virtuous human beings have been converted into haggard skeletons of vice or virtue.

Herewith I will break off from the matter; whoever is equal to it will be able to make his own application to 'Richard.' . . . .

No. 84.

On the fifty-first evening Diderot's 'Le Père de Famille' was performed.

As this excellent play—it only pleased the Parisians moderately—is likely to all appearance to hold its place on our stage for some time, I hope to have occasion and space enough to pour out all I have noted down from time to time concerning the piece itself and the whole dramatic system of the author.

I will go back very far. Diderot did not for the first time express his dissatisfaction with the theatre of his nation in the 'Fils naturel' and the dialogues appended. Several years earlier he had already signified that he had not the high conception of it with which his fellow-countrymen deceive themselves, and Europe lets itself be deceived by them. But he expressed this in a book in which one would certainly not search for such like matters; in a book in which a tone of *persiflage* is so predominant, that to most readers, even that which is good common-sense therein, seems nothing but farce and mockery. Beyond doubt Diderot had his reasons for preferring at first to bring out his most secret sentiments in such a book. A wise man often says in joke what he intends afterwards to repeat in earnest.

This book is called 'Les Bijoux indiscrets' and Diderot now disclaims having written it Diderot does well, but yet he has written it and must have written it if he does not wish to be a plagiarist. It is moreover certain that only such a young man could have written this book as would afterwards be ashamed to have written it.

It is just as well if the smallest possible number of my readers know this book; I will take good care not to make them acquainted with it beyond what serves my purpose.

An emperor—I know not where nor who—had made

various jewels reveal so many ugly things by means of a magic ring, that his favourite would not hear any more about it. She rather preferred to break with her own sex on this account, anyway she resolved that for a fortnight she would limit her intercourse solely to the sultan's majesty and a few wits. These were Selim and Riccaric: Selim a courtier and Riccaric a member of the imperial academy, a man who had studied the ancients, and, without being a pedant, was a great admirer of them. The favourite was once conversing with him when their conversation turned on the miserable nature of academic speeches, concerning which no one was more uneasy than the sultan himself, because it annoyed him to hear himself incessantly praised at the expense of his father and his forefathers, foreseeing that the academy would some day sacrifice his fame in like manner to the fame of his successor. Selim, as a courtier, had agreed to all the sultan had said and thus the conversation was led on to the theatre, which conversation I herewith impart to my readers.

"I think you are in error, sir," replied Riccaric to Selim. "The academy is still the sanctuary of good taste, neither sages nor poets can point to halcyon days to which we could not oppose others taken from our own times. Our theatre was held and is still held the best in all Africa. What a masterpiece is Tuxigraphe's 'Tamerlane!' It combines the pathetic of Eurisope with the sublime of Azophe. It is the purely classical."

"I saw the first performance of 'Tamerlane,' said the favourite, "and thought the thread of the play was very rightly conducted, the dialogue very eloquent, *les bienséances* well observed."

"What a difference, madame, between an author like Tuxigraphe who has been nurtured on the ancients and the greater number of our modern writers!" said Riccaric.

"But these moderns" said Selim "whom you abuse so lustily are yet far removed from being as contemptible as you suppose. Or is it possible that you find no genius, no invention, no fire, no character, no description, no tirades in them? What care I for the rules so long as I am amused. Truly it is not the comments of the wise Almudir, or the learned Abdaldok, nor the poetics of the

acute Facardin, all of which I have not read, that make me admire the plays of Aboulcazem, Muhardar, and Albaboukre, and of so many other Saracens. Are there then other rules than the imitation of nature? And have we not the same eyes as those with which these studied?"

"Nature," replied Riccaric, "shows itself to us every moment in various guises All are true, but all are not equally beautiful. To make a good choice from among them, this is what we must learn from the works of which you do not seem to think much. They are the collected experiences of the authors and their predecessors. However intelligent we may be we only acquire our ideas one after the other, and one individual would flatter himself vainly if he deemed that he could observe for himself, in the short space of a lifetime, all that has been discovered for him in so many centuries. Were this not so we could maintain that a science might owe its origin, its development and its perfection to one single mind, which as you know is against all experience"

"From this," replied Selim, "nothing further follows but that the moderns who can make use of all the treasures which have been collected up to their day, must be richer than the ancients, or if this comparison does not please you, that they must necessarily see further from the shoulders of the giants on which they have stept, than these can see themselves In truth what are their natural history, their astronomy, their navigation, their mechanics, their arithmetic in comparison to ours? Why therefore should we not be equally superior to them in eloquence and poetry?"

"Selim," said the favourite, "the difference is great and Riccaric can explain this to you some other time. He can tell you why our tragedies are worse than those of the ancients, but that they are so I can easily take upon myself to prove to you. I cannot accuse you of not having read the ancients. You have acquired too much elegant knowledge for the theatre of the ancients to be unknown to you. Now I ask you to put aside certain ideas that refer to their customs, their manners and their religion, and which offend you only because circumstances have changed, and then tell me whether

their subjects are not always noble, choice and interesting? Does not the action develop quite naturally? does not the simple dialogue approach very near to nature? are the complications in the least forced? is the interest divided? the action overladen with episodes? Transport yourself in thought to the island of Alindala, examine all that took place there, listen to all that has been said from the moment that young Ibrahim and the wily Forfanti landed, approach the cave of the unhappy Polipsilo, lose no word of his murmurs and then tell me whether the smallest thing occurs that could disturb your illusion? Name to me a single modern play which can bear the same test, which can lay claim to the same degree of perfection and you shall have conquered."

"By Bramah!" said the Sultan yawning, "madame has made us an excellent academic address!"

"I do not understand the rules," continued the favourite. "and still less the learned words in which they have been clothed. But I know that only the true pleases and touches. I know also that the perfection of a drama consists in the accurate imitation of an action, at which the spectator deems he is present, his illusion not being destroyed by any interruption. Now is there anything in the least resembling this in the tragedies you praise so highly?"

No. 85.

"Do you praise their subjects? These are generally so involved and various that it would be a miracle if so many things could really occur in so short a time. The destruction or the preservation of a kingdom, the marriage of a princess, the fall of a prince, all this occurs as rapidly as we turn our hands Is a conspiracy concerned? It is planned in the first act, in the second it is already hatched, in the third all the measures have been taken, all obstructions removed, the conspirators are ready; in the next there will be a revolution, an encounter, even a pitched battle. And all this you call well-developed, interesting, warm, probable? I can forgive such an opinion to you least of all, who know how much it often costs to bring about the most miserable intrigue and

how much time is lost in the smallest political affair over preliminaries, conferences and discussions."

"It is true madame" replied Selim, "our plays are a little overladen; but that is a necessary evil; without the help of episodes we should be chilled."

"That is to say: in order to give fire and spirit to the imitation of an action, this action must be represented neither as it is nor as it should be. Can anything more absurd be imagined? Scarcely, unless it were that the violins play a lively air, some merry sonata, while the spectators are to be in anxiety concerning the prince who is on the point of losing his beloved, his throne and his life."

"Madame," said Mongogul, "you are quite right; we ought to play sad airs and I will go and order some." So saying he got up and went out and Selim, Riccaric and the favourite continued the conversation among themselves.

"At least madame" replied Selim "you will not deny that if the episodes destroy our illusion, the dialogue puts us back into that state. I do not know who understands that better than our tragic poets."

"Then no one understands it" she replied. "The wit, the playful and the stilted elements that reign therein are removed a thousand, thousand miles from nature. The author tries in vain to hide himself, he does not escape my eyes and I see him continually behind his personages. Cinna, Sertorius, Maximus, Æmilia are at all moments Corneille's speaking-tubes. Our old Saracens did not converse together thus. If you like, Riccaric can translate some passages to you and you will hear the simple nature that speaks from their mouths. I should so like to say to the moderns: Gentlemen instead of endowing your personages with wit at all moments, why do you not seek to put them into positions that would give them some?"

"To judge by what madame has said as to the course and the dialogue of our dramas, it would not seem as if you would accord much indulgence to their *dénouement*" said Selim.

"No, certainly not," replied the favourite, "there are a hundred bad ones for one that is good. One is not

sufficiently led up to, the other occurs as by a miracle. If the author does not know what to do with a person whom he has dragged from scene to scene through five acts, he finishes him off quickly with a dagger thrust, all the world begins to weep and I, I laugh as though I were mad. Again did ever any one speak as we declaim? Do princes and kings walk differently from other men? Do they ever gesticulate like madmen and possessed creatures? And do princesses howl when they speak? It is generally assumed that we have brought tragedy to a high degree of perfection, and I for my part hold it to be almost proved that of all species of literature attempted by the Africans during the last centuries just this has remained the most imperfect."

The favourite had just got to this point in her abuse of our theatrical works, when Mongogul re-entered. "Madame" he said, "you will do me a favour if you proceed. You see I understand how to shorten the art of poetry when I find it too long."

"Let us assume" continued the favourite, "that a man came here fresh from Angote who had never heard of a play in his life, but who was not wanting either in knowledge or good sense, who knew what could happen at a court, who was not unacquainted with the intrigues of courtiers, the jealousies of ministers and the machinations of women. Supposing I said to such a man in confidence. 'My friend, dreadful things are at work in the seraglio. The prince, who is angry with his son because he suspects him of loving Manimonbande, is a man whom I hold capable of the most cruel vengeance. To all appearance this matter must have sad consequences. If you like I will contrive that you shall be a witness of all that passes.' He accepts my proposal and I lead him into a box protected by a grating, out of which he can see the theatre, which he thinks is the sultan's palace. Do you believe that notwithstanding all the gravity I endeavour to maintain, this stranger's illusion will last for a moment? Must you not rather concede that he will laugh in my face in the first scene as he sees the stilted walk of the actors, their strange dresses, their exaggerated gestures, and hears their language

spoken with strange emphasis in rhymed and measured speech? Will he not say straight out either that I am making sport of him or that the prince and all his court are demented?"

"I admit," said Selim, "that this assumed case makes me hesitate; but could you not consider that we go to a play with the knowledge that we are about to assist at the imitation of an action, not at the action itself"

"Should this knowledge hinder the action from being represented in the most natural manner possible?" asked the favourite.

Here the conversation gradually passes on to other matters that do not concern us. Let us turn and consider what we have read. Beyond question Diderot clear and simple! But at that time all these truths were spoken to the winds. They did not rouse any feeling in the French public until they were repeated with all didactic solemnity and accompanied by examples in which the author endeavoured to depart from some of these criticised faults and to tread the paths of nature and illusion. Then envy awoke criticism Oh now it was clear why Diderot did not deem the theatre of his nation at the acme of perfection which they believed it to be, why he saw so many faults in their lauded masterpieces; only and solely to make room for his own plays! He had to decry the method of his predecessors because he felt that if he pursued this method he would find himself immeasurably below them. He had to be a miserable charlatan despising all strange treacle in order that no one should buy any but his own. Thus the Palissots fell upon his plays.

Beyond question he had given them some excuse in his 'Fils naturel.' This first attempt is by no means equal to the 'Père de famille.' There is too much monotony in the characters, they are too romantic, the dialogue is stilted and archaic, a pedantic mixture of new-fangled philosophical sentences; all these matters gave to censure an easy field. . . . Neither can it be denied that the form which Diderot gave to the accompanying dialogues and the tone he adopted in them, were somewhat vain and pompous, that he brought forward various comments which were not new and not peculiar to him as though they were

wholly new discourses and that other comments had not the profundity they seemed to have in his dazzling language.

No. 86.

For example, Diderot maintains[1] that in human nature there are at most a dozen comic characters of prominent feature, and that the little varieties in the human character cannot be so happily treated as the purely unmixed characters. He therefore proposed that classes instead of characters should be brought upon the stage and desired that their treatment should form the especial labour of serious comedy. He says, "Until now character has been the chief work of comedy and class distinctions were something accidental; now however the social standing must be the chief consideration and the character the accidental. The whole intrigue used to be drawn from the character, the circumstances under which it best evinced itself were carefully chosen and interwoven. In future the duties, prejudices, and inconveniences of a social standing must serve for the groundwork of a play. This source seems to me far more productive, of far greater extent, of far greater utility, than the source of character. If the character was a little exaggerated, then the spectator would say to himself, this is not I. But he cannot deny that the class represented is his class, he cannot possibly mistake his duties. He is forced to apply that which he hears to himself."

Palissot's objections to this are not groundless[2] He denies that nature is so poor in original characters that the comic poets have already exhausted them. Molière saw enough new characters before him and believed that he had scarcely treated the smallest part of those that could be treated. The passage in which he rapidly constructs various of these is as curious as it is instructive, for it makes us suspect that the Misanthrope would scarcely have remained his *non plus ultra* if he had lived longer.[3]

[1] The dialogue following 'Le fils naturel'

[2] 'Petites Lettres sur de grands Philosophes,' Letter II

[3] 'Impromptu de Versailles,' Sc. II · "Eh! mon pauvre Marquis, nous lui (à Molière) fournirons toujours assez de matière, et nous ne

Palissot himself is not infelicitous in adding some new characters of his own observation; the stupid Mæcenas with his servile clients; the man in the wrong place; the suspicious man whose elaborately conceived attacks are wrecked on the simple honesty of a worthy man, the pseudo-philosopher; the eccentric, the hypocrite with social virtues, since the religious hypocrites are somewhat out of fashion. Truly there are no common vistas thus displayed to eyes that can look well into the distance that here opens out into the endless. Here is harvest enough for the few reapers who may dare to venture upon it!

And if the comic characters are really so few and these few have been exhausted, will social classes help us out of this perplexity, objects Palissot? Let us choose one as an example, the position of judge. Must I not give this judge a character? Must he not be sad or merry, serious or careless, affable or violent? And will it not be merely this character which lifts him out of the range of a metaphysical abstraction and converts him into a real being? And consequently will not the foundations of the intrigue and the moral of the play once more rest upon character?

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prenons guères le chemin de nous rendre sages par tout ce qu'il fait et tout ce qu'il dit. Crois-tu qu'il ait épuisé dans ses comédies tous les ridicules des hommes, et sans sortir de la cour, n'a-t-il pas encore vingt caractères de gens, où il n'a pas touché? N'a-t-il pas, par exemple, ceux qui se font les plus grandes amitiés du monde, et qui, le dos tourné, font galanterie de se déchirer l'un l'autre? N'a-t-il pas ces adulateurs à outrance, ces flatteurs insipides qui n'assaisonnent d'aucun sel les louanges qu'ils donnent, et dont toutes les flatteries ont une douceur fade qui fait mal au cœur à ceux qui les écoutent? N'a-t-il pas ces lâches courtisans de la faveur, ces perfides adorateurs de la fortune, qui vous encensent dans la prospérité, et vous accablent dans la disgrâce? N'a-t-il pas ceux qui sont toujours mécontents de la cour, ces suivants inutiles, ces incommodes assidus, ces gens, dis-je, qui pour services ne peuvent compter que des importunités et qui veulent qu'on les récompense d'avoir obsédé le prince dix ans durant? N'a-t-il pas ceux qui caressent également tout le monde, qui promènent leurs civilités à droite, à gauche, et courent à tous ceux qu'ils voyent avec les mêmes embrassades, et les mêmes protestations d'amitié?——Va, va, Marquis, Molière aura toujours plus de sujets qu'il n'en voudra, et tout ce qu'il a touché n'est que bagatelle au prix de ce qui reste."

Consequently will not class distinctions again become the accidental?

It is true that Diderot might reply to this. Certainly the person whom I dignify with a standing must also have his individual character; but I desire that this should be such as does not clash with the duties and circumstances of his class but rather harmonises well with them. Therefore if this person is a judge, it is not open to me to make him serious or careless, affable or violent; he must needs be serious and affable and both in the degree that his occupation demands.

This, I say, Diderot might have replied; but then he would have approached another danger, namely the danger of perfect characters. His class personages would never do anything else but what they must do according to their duty and conscience, they would act exactly according to rote Do we expect this in comedy? Can such representations be attractive enough? Will the advantage we may hope from them be great enough to compensate the labour of creating a new species, of writing a new poetics?

The danger rock of perfect characters does not seem to me to have been sufficiently observed by Diderot. In his plays he rather steers straight towards it and in his critical sea-charts he finds no warning signals. He rather finds matters in it that advise him to direct his course thither. It is only needful to recall what he says on contrasting the characters of Terence's 'Adelphi.' The two contrasted fathers are depicted with equal force, so that the subtlest critic would be perplexed to name the chief personage, whether Micio or Demea. If he pronounces a verdict before the last act he might easily be amazed on finding that he whom he held throughout five acts to be a sensible man, is nothing but a fool, and that he whom he deemed a fool is actually the more sensible man. We should be almost inclined to say at the commencement of the fifth act of this drama, that the author had been forced by the difficulty of contrast, to abandon his end and to reverse the whole interest of the play What has become of this? We no longer know for whom to interest ourselves At the beginning we were with Micio against

Demea, and in the end we are for neither. We almost demand a third father to hold the mean between these two and show wherein they have failed.

Not I. I earnestly beg to be excused this third father, whether in the same play or by himself. What father does not think he knows what a father should be? We all think ourselves to be on the right road; we only ask now and then to be warned against aberrations on either side.

Diderot is right; it is better if the characters are only different, not contrasted. Contrasted characters are less natural, and augment the romantic aspect that in any case is seldom lacking to dramatic events. For one gathering in common life wherein the contrast of character is shown as saliently as the dramatist demands, there are thousands where they are merely different. Very true. But is not a character that always moves in the same grooves marked out by reason and virtue, a still greater phenomenon? Among twenty gatherings in common life, we shall sooner find ten in which fathers take totally opposed paths in the education of their children, than one that can show the ideal father. And this true father is always the same, is singular though the variations from him may be endless. Consequently the plays that bring forward the true father will be individually more unnatural, collectively more monotonous, than those which introduce fathers of various principles. It is also certain that those characters which in society seem merely different, contrast themselves of their own accord as soon as conflicting interests put them in motion. It is moreover quite natural that they should then be eager to seem yet more opposed than they really are. The vivacious man will be fire and flame against him who seems to be acting in a lukewarm manner, and the lukewarm man will be cold as ice in order that the other may commit as many indiscretions as may eventually be useful to him.

Nos. 87 and 88.

In like manner other remarks of Palissot's, if not quite just, are not wholly false. He plainly enough discerns the

ring into which he would thrust his lance, only in the eagerness of his attack his lance shifts its place, and he just misses the ring. Thus among other things he says of 'Le fils naturel,' "What a strange title! the natural son! Why is the piece so called? What influence does Dorval's birth exert? What event does it provoke? To what situations does it give rise? What void does it fill? What can have been the intention of the author? To serve up a few observations against the prejudice of illegitimate birth? What sensible being does not know of his own accord how unjust is such a prejudice?"

Diderot might have replied to this: This circumstance was needful to the complication of my fable, without it it would have been far more improbable that Dorval should not know his sister, and his sister not know of a brother. It was open to me to borrow the title thence and I might have borrowed the title from a yet more trifling circumstance. If Diderot had replied thus, would Palissot not have been refuted?

Meanwhile the character of the natural son is open to quite another objection with which Palissot could have attacked the poet far more sharply. Namely this, that the circumstance of illegitimate birth and consequent neglect and seclusion imposed on Dorval for many years, is a circumstance too peculiar and singular, must have had too much influence on the formation of his character, for it to have that universality which according to Diderot's own doctrine is demanded in a comic character. This subject tempts me to a digression on this doctrine, and why need I resist such a temptation in a work of this kind?

Diderot says "The comic genus has species, and the tragic has individuals I will explain. The hero of a tragedy is such and such a man, he is Regulus, or Brutus, or Cato, and no other. The prominent persons in a comedy, on the other hand, must represent a large number of mankind If we accorded to them one peculiar physiognomy so that only one single individual could resemble them, comedy would lapse back into its childhood. Terence seems to me to have once fallen into this error His Heautontimorumenos is a father who sorrows over the

fearful resolution to which he has driven his son by excessive rigour and who therefore punishes himself by curtailing his food and clothing, avoiding society, dismissing his servants, and cultivating his fields with his own hands. It may be said there are no such fathers. The largest city would scarcely furnish one example of such rare sorrow in a century."

In the first place concerning the Heautontimorumenos. if this character is really to be censured, the blame falls on Menander, not on Terence. Menander was the creator of this being, to whom, to all appearance he accorded a far more extended *rôle* than he plays in Terence's imitation, in which his sphere is limited, because of the double intrigue.[1] But that it comes from Menander, would

[1] That is, if the sixth line of the prologue—

"Duplex quæ ex argumento facta est simplici"

—was really so written by the poet and is not meant to be understood otherwise than Dacier and after her, the new English translator of Terence, Colman, explain it "Terence only meant to say that he had doubled the characters, instead of one old man, one young gallant, one mistress, as in Menander, he has two old men, &c He therefore adds, very properly, 'novam esse ostendi,' which certainly could not have been implied had the characters been the same in the Greek poet" Even Adrian Barlandus, nay even the old glossa interlinealis of Ascensius did not read the *duplex* otherwise; 'propter senes et juvenes,' says this one, and the other writes 'nam in hac latina senes duo, adolescentes item duo sunt' And yet this rendering will not satisfy me, because I cannot see what remains of the play if we take away the persons by whom Terence doubled the characters of the old man and the lovers I cannot conceive how Menander could treat this subject without Chremes and Clitipho, both are so interwoven that I cannot think of a complication or solution without them. I will not even name another explanation by which Julius Scaliger made himself ridiculous Also that which was given by Eugraphius and adopted by Faerne is quite absurd In this perplexity the critics have sought to change now the *duplex*, now the *simplici* in the line, which the MSS in a measure justify Some read—

'Duplex quæ ex argumento facta est duplici,'

others,

'Simplex quæ ex argumento facta est duplici'

What remains but that some one should now come and read—

'Simplex quæ ex argumento facta est simplici'?

alone have checked me from condemning Terence on its account. The saying ὦ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε, πότερος ἀρ' ὑμῶν

And quite seriously, this is how I should like to read it Let any one refer to the passage in the context and ponder my reasons

'Ex integra Græca integram comœdiam
Hodie sum acturus Heautontimorumenon:
Simplex quæ ex argumento facta est simplici'

It is well known what was reproached to Terence by his envious co-labourers at the theatre—

'Multa contaminasse Græcas, dum facit
Paucas latinas'

—for he was in the habit of welding two Greek plays into one Latin one Thus he combined his 'Andria' from the 'Andria' and 'Perinthia' of Menander, his 'Eunuchus' from the 'Eunuchus' and the 'Colax' of the same poet, his 'Brothers' from the 'Brothers' of Menander and a play of Diphilus On account of this reproach he justifies himself in the prologue to his 'Heautontimorumenos' He admits the fact, but denies that he has acted otherwise than many good poets before him —

'Id esse factum hic non negat
Neque se pigere, et deinde factum iri autumat,
Habet bonorum exemplum. quo exemplo sibi
Licere id facere, quod ille fecerunt, putat'

'I have done it,' he says, 'and I think I shall often do it again' This refers to former plays but not to the present one, the 'Heautontimorumenos,' for this was not taken from two Greek plays but from a single one of this name And this is what he meant to say in the contested line as I propose reading it—

'Simplex quæ ex argumento facta est simplici'

'As simple as the play of Menander, so simple is my play,' is what Terence would say, 'I have put in nothing from other plays, but only taken from a single one of the same name It is taken as long as it is from the Greek play, and the Greek play is all in my Latin one, I therefore give

'Ex integra Græca integram comœdiam.'

The meaning that Faerne found given to *integra* in an old glossary that it was as much as a *nullo tacta* is manifestly false here, because it would only apply to the first integra, but nowise to the second integram And therefore I believe my supposition in reading will bear attention Only the following line will evoke opposition.—

'Novam esse ostendi, et quæ esset'

πότερον ἐμιμήσατο is certainly rather frigid than witty, but would it have been said at all of a poet who was capable of describing characters whereof a large town could only show a specimen once in a century? True, in a hundred and more plays one such character might have escaped him. The most productive head can write itself empty, and when imagination can recall no more real subjects for imitation, it composes such, and these generally become caricatures. Diderot thinks he has observed that Horace who had such delicate taste, had already perceived the fault in question, and had censured it lightly in passing.

The passage is said to be in the second satire of the first book, where Horace desires to show that fools are in the habit of falling from one exaggeration into its opposite. He says that Fufidius fears to be held extravagant.

It will be said. 'If Terence admits that he has taken the whole play from a single play of Menander's, how can he pretend to have proved that his play is new, "novam esse"?' I can easily remove this difficulty by an explanation of these words, of which I venture to aver that it is the only true one, although it has only been said by me and no commentator, so far as I know, has even distantly surmised it I say that the words

'Novam esse ostendi, et quæ esset'

do not refer to that which Terence makes the prologue say in the former plays, but 'apud ædiles' must be understood 'Novus' does not here mean what has arisen in Terence's own head, but only what was not existent before in Latin He says, 'that my play is a new play, that it is such a play as has never before appeared in Latin, that I have myself translated it from the Greek, this I have proved to the ædiles who bought it of me' To agree with me in this it is only needful to recall the dispute he had concerning his 'Eunuchus' with the ædiles He had sold this to them as a new translation from the Greek, but his adversary, Lavinius, tried to persuade the ædiles that it was not from the Greek, but taken from the plays of Nævius and Plautus It is true that the 'Eunuchus' had much in common with these plays, yet still Lavinius's accusation was false, for Terence had only drawn from the same Greek source, whereat Nævius and Plautus had drawn before him, without his knowledge Therefore to guard against similar calumnies with his 'Heautontimorumenos' what was more natural than that he showed the ædiles the Greek original, and instructed them concerning its contents? Nay the ædiles may even have demanded this of him, and this is the reference —

'Novam esse ostendi, et quæ esset.'"

What does he do? He lends monthly at five per cent. and gets himself paid in advance The more another needs the money, the more interest he demands. He knows the names of all the youths who are of good family, and are entering the world, but who have to complain of hard fathers Perhaps you expect that this man makes a show that matches with his revenues? Far from it! He is his own most cruel enemy and the father in the comedy who punishes himself for his son's departure cannot torture himself worse *non se pejus cruciaverit* This "worse," this *pejus* Diderot insists has a double meaning, in one sense it applies to Fufidius, and in another to Terence, such incidental hits were, he thinks, quite in the character of Horace

This may be the case without its being applied to the passage in question For here it seems to me, the incidental allusion would damage the main sense. Fufidius is not so great a fool if there are more such fools. If the father in Terence tortures himself thus foolishly, if he had as little cause to torture himself as Fufidius, he shares this absurdity and Fufidius becomes less absurd and singular. Only if Fufidius is as hard and cruel against himself without cause, as the father in Terence is with cause, if he does from vile avarice what the other does from remorse and sorrow only, then we shall deem the former quite contemptible and ridiculous, while we consider the latter pitiable And certainly every great sorrow is of the nature of the sorrow of this father; if it does not forget itself it tortures itself It is against all experience that an example of such sorrow is found only once in a hundred years Every sorrow acts somewhat in this manner, only more or less so and with some difference or other. Cicero had studied the nature of sorrow more deeply. In the behaviour of the Heautontimorumenos he saw nothing more than what all mourners would do, not only when they are carried away by feeling, but as they think they must continue in cold blood.[2] "Hæc omnia recta, vera, debita putantes faciunt in dolore, maximeque declaratur, hoc quasi officii judicio fieri, quod si qui forte, cum se in luctu esse vellent, aliquid fecerunt humanius, aut si

[2] Tusc. Quæst lib. iii. c 27.

hilarius locuti essent, revocant se rursus ad mœstitiam, peccatique se insimulant, quod dolere intermiserint: pueros vero matres et magistri castigare etiam solent, nec verbis solum, sed etiam verberibus, si quid in domestico luctu hilarius ab iis factum est, aut dictum, plorare cogunt. Quid ille Terentianus ipse se puniens?" &c

Menedemus, this is the name of the self-torturer in Terence, is not so hard upon himself from sorrow, but why he denies himself even the smallest luxury is chiefly that he may save the more for his absent son and thus secure in the future a pleasant life to him whom he has forced to embrace such an unpleasant one. What is there in this that a hundred fathers would not do? If Diderot thinks that the peculiar and the singular consists therein, that Menedemus fells, digs, ploughs, he has in his haste thought more of the customs of our times than of those of the ancients. Certainly a modern father would not so easily do this; very few would know how to set about it, but the rich high-born Romans and Greeks were well acquainted with all agricultural labours and were not ashamed to use their hands.

But granted that all be exactly as Diderot says; let the character of this self-torturer on account of this singularity, on account of this trait peculiar to him be as unsuited to a comic character as may be.—has not Diderot fallen into the same fault? What can be more eccentric than the character of his Dorval, what character could have more of a peculiar trait than the character of this natural son? Diderot lets him say of himself, "Immediately after my birth I was cast upon a spot that might be called the boundary between society and solitude, and when I opened my eyes and searched for the links that connected me with mankind I could scarcely find any traces of them. For thirty years I wandered about lonely, unknown, unheeded, without feeling the affection of any human being, without meeting any human being who sought mine." That a natural child should search in vain for its parents, that it should look in vain for a person connected with it by the closer ties of blood, is very natural and might happen to nine out of ten. But that he could wander about

for thirty whole years in the world, without having felt the affection of any human being, that he should not have met one human being who sought for his affection, this I am almost inclined to say is absolutely impossible. Or if it were possible what a number of quite peculiar circumstances must have arisen on both sides, on the side of the world, and on the side of this so long isolated being, to make this sad possibility a reality. Century upon century must pass before it could ever become possible again. At least may Heaven grant that I may never otherwise conceive of humanity. I would rather else that I had been born a bear and not a man. It is not possible, no man can be so lost among men. Cast him whither you will, if he only falls among men he falls among beings who before he has had time to look about him are ready on all sides to attach themselves to him If not the noble then it is the lowly; if not the happy, then it is the unhappy, but human beings they always will be. Just so a drop of water need only touch the surface of water to be received by and to be absorbed in it, be the water what it will, pond or well, stream or sea, belt or ocean.

Now this solitude of thirty years among mankind is to have formed the character of Dorval. What character could resemble him? Who will recognise himself even in the smallest particle in him?

I find that Diderot saved himself a loophole. Subsequent to the passage I have quoted; he says "In the serious genus characters will often be as general as in the comic, only that they will always be less individual in the comic than in the tragic." He would therefore reply, the character of Dorval is no comic character, it is a character such as serious drama demands and just as this must fill the place between comedy and tragedy so also the characters must hold the mean between the comic and the tragic characters They need not be as general as the former if only they are not as entirely individual as the latter, and of this nature the character of Dorval might be.

Thus we have happily returned to the point from which we started, we wished to investigate whether it was true that tragedy had individuals, and comedy species, that is to say whether it is true that the persons in a

comedy must seize and represent a great number of men while at the same time the hero of tragedy is only this or that man, only Regulus or Brutus or Cato. If this is true, then what Diderot says of the personages of the middle species, which he calls serious comedy, presents no difficulties, and the character of Dorval would not be so blameworthy. But if it is not true then this also falls of its own accord, and no justification can arise for the character of the natural son from such an arbitrary decision.

No. 89.

I must first notice that Diderot has left his assertion without any proof. He must have regarded it as a truth that no person could or would doubt, which it was only necessary to know in order to understand its reason. Can he have found this in the true name of the tragical hero? because these are called Achilles, Alexander, Cato, Augustus, and because Achilles, Alexander, Cato, Augustus were real people can he have assumed therefrom that all that the poet lets them say and act in tragedy can only belong to these so-called persons and to no one else in the world? It would almost seem so.

But Aristotle had refuted this error two thousand years ago and pointed to the truth of the essential difference between history and poetry, as well as the greater benefit conferred by the latter than by the former. He did this so luminously, that I need only quote his words to arouse no small wonder how Diderot could have held an opposite view in so obvious a matter.

Aristotle says[1] after he has established the essential qualities of the poetic fable. "From this is therefore shown that it is not the poet's duty to relate what has occurred, but to relate of what nature these occurrences might have been, their probability or necessity. For historians and poets are not distinguished by metrical or unmetrical speech, for the books of Herodotus might be converted into metre and they would nevertheless be nothing more when metrical, than what they are in unmetrical

[1] Poetics, 9th chap.

language, a history. They are distinguished herein that the one relates what has occurred, the other relates of what nature the occurrence has been. Therefore poetry is more philosophical and useful than history. Poetry refers to the general and history to the particular. The general is how such and such a man would speak or act according to probability or necessity and this is what poetry regards when giving its names. The particular, on the contrary, is what Alcibiades has done or suffered. All this has been manifestly shown in comedy, for if the fable is constructed according to probability the distinctive names are given afterwards, not as with the iambic poet who remains with the individual. In tragedy we hold by names already existent for the reason that the possible is credible and we do not believe that possible that has not occurred, while that which has occurred must obviously be possible because it would not have occurred if it had not been possible. Yet in some tragedies there are only one or two well-known names and the rest are invented, in some there are none at all, as in Agathon's 'Flower.' In this play actions and names are equally invented, but it does not on this account please the less."

In this passage which I have quoted according to my own translation, trying to be as literal as possible, various matters have been misunderstood or not understood at all by the commentators whom I could consult. What belongs to the matter in hand I must mention.

It is unquestionable that Aristotle makes no distinctions between the personages in tragedy and comedy in regard to their generality. Both, not even excluding the persons in epics,—all persons of poetical imitation without distinction, are to speak and act not only as would become them individually and alone, but as each of them would and must speak or act according to the nature of the same circumstances. In this καθόλου, in this generality, is the sole reason why poetry is more philosophical and more instructive than history; and if it is true that those comic poets who would give especial physiognomies to their personages, so that only a single individual in the world could be like them, would turn back comedy into its childhood and pervert it into satire as

Diderot says; it is equally true that those tragic poets who would only represent such and such a man, only Cæsar or Cato according to their individualities without at the same time showing how these individualities are connected with the character of Cæsar and Cato that they may have in common with others, weaken tragedy and debase it to history.

But Aristotle also says that poetry aims at this generality of the persons by the names accorded them (οὗ *στοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη*) which is specially marked in comedy. It is this which the commentators have been satisfied to quote from Aristotle but have not in the least explained. Many of them have expressed themselves concerning it in such a manner that we can clearly see they either had no ideas at all or quite false ones. The question is. how does poetry regard the generality of these personages when it accords them names, and how has this regard to the generality of the person been long visible especially in comedy?

The words. *ἔστι δὲ καθόλου μὲν, τῷ ποίῳ τά ποι ἅττα συμβαίνει λέγειν, ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τὸ εἰχὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, οὗ στοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη*, is translated by Dacier as. "une chose générale, c'est ce que tout homme d'un tel ou d'un tel caractère, a dû dire, ou faire vraisemblablement ou nécessairement, ce qui est le but de la poésie lors même qu'elle impose les noms à ses personnages." Herr Curtius translates in the same manner "the general is that which a certain man thinks that a certain character would speak or do according to probability or necessity This general is the goal of poetry even if it imposes names on its personages." In their annotations also both agree; the one says entirely what the other says They both explain what is meant by the general, they both say that this general is the goal of poetry, but how poetry regards this general when bestowing its names, of this no one says a word. The Frenchman with his "lors même," the German with his "even if" show plainly that they knew nothing or understood nothing of what Aristotle would say for this "lors même" and "even if" means nothing more with them than "although" and consequently they make Aristotle merely say that notwithstanding that

poetry accords to her personages names of individual persons she does not aim at the peculiarity of these persons but at the general The words of Dacier[2] which I will quote in a note show this plainly. Now it is true that this is not false, but neither does it exhaust the meaning of Aristotle Not enough that poetry, regardless of the names taken by individual persons, aims at generality, Aristotle says that with these names it aims at generality, οὗ στοχάζεται I should imagine that both are not the same thing, and if they are not the same thing we are necessarily thrown upon the question at which does it aim. To this question the commentators do not reply.

No. 90.

How it aims towards it, says Aristotle, this I have plainly shown long ago in comedy. ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς κωμῳδίας ἤδη τοῦτο δῆλον γέγονεν· συστάσαντες γὰρ τὸν μῦθον διὰ τῶν

[2] Aristote prévient ici une objection, qu'on pouvait lui faire, sur la définition, qu'il vient de donner d'une chose générale, car les ignorants n'auraient pas manqué de lui dire, qu'Homère, par exemple, n'a point en vue d'écrire une action générale et universelle, mais une action particulière, puisqu'il raconte ce qu'on fait de certains hommes, comme Achille, Agamemnon, Ulysse, etc, et que, par conséquent, il n'y a aucune différence entre Homère et un historien, qui aurait écrit les actions d'Achille Le philosophe va au-devant de cette objection, en faisant voir que les poetes, c'est-à-dire, les auteurs d'une tragédie ou d'un poeme épique, lors même qu'ils imposent les noms à leurs personnages, ne pensent en aucune manière à les faire parler véritablement, ce qu'ils seraient obligés de faire, s'ils écrivaient les actions particulières et véritables d'un certain homme, nommé Achille ou Œdipe, mais qu'ils se proposent de les faire parler et agir nécessairement ou vraisemblablement c'est-à-dire, de leur faire dire et faire tout ce que des hommes de ce même caractère devaient faire et dire en cet état, ou par nécessité, ou au moins selon les règles de la vraisemblance, ce qui prouve incontestablement que ce sont des actions générales et universelles."

Herr Curtius says nothing else in his annotation, only he endeavours to show the general and particular in examples which do not fully prove that he has understood the matter to its depth. For according to them it would only be personified characters whom the poet makes speak and act, whereas they should be characterised persons

εἰκότων, οὕτω τὰ τύχοντα ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθέασι, καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ οἱ ἰαμβοποιοὶ περὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον.

For this passage I must also quote the translations of Dacier and Curtius. Dacier says: "C'est ce qui est déjà rendu sensible dans la comédie, car les poetes comiques, après avoir dressé leur sujet sur la vraisemblance, imposent après cela à leurs personnages tels noms qu'il leur plaît, et n'imitent pas les poetes satyriques, qui ne s'attachent qu'aux choses particulières," and Curtius says "In comedy this has long been visible, for after the writers of comedy have arranged the plan of their fable according to probability, they give to their personages arbitrary names and do not set themselves a particular goal like the iambic poets." What do we find in these translations of that which Aristotle wished chiefly to say? Neither let him say anything more than that the comic poets did not act like the iambic (that is to say the satiric poets) and dwell on the particular, but went towards the general in their personages, to whom they gave arbitrary names, "tels noms qu'il leur plaît." Granted that *τὰ τύχοντα ὀνόματα* means arbitrary names, what have both translators done with *οὕτω*? Did they think this *οὕτω* meant nothing? and yet here it means all, for according to this *οὕτω* the comic poet does not only give arbitrary names to his personages, but he gave them these arbitrary names so, *οὕτω*. And how so? So that with these names themselves they aimed at the general: *οὗ στοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη*, and how did this happen? About this I should like to find a word in the annotations of Dacier and Curtius

Without further digression it happened as I am about to tell. Comedy gave names to its personages, names which by means of the grammatical derivation and composition or by some other meaning expressed the characteristic of these personages, in a word they gave them speaking names, names it was only needful to hear in order to know at once of what nature those would be who bore those names. I will quote a passage from Donatus on this subject. He says on occasion of the first line of the first act of 'The Brothers' "Nomina personarum in comœdiis duntaxat, habere debent rationem et etymologiam. Etenim absurdum est, comicum aperte

argumentum confingere: vel nomen personæ incongruum dare vel officium quod sit a nomine diversum.[1] Hinc servus fidelis Parmeno: infidelis vel Syrus vel Geta miles Thraso vel Polemon; juvenis Pamphilus: matrona Myrrhina, et puer ab odore Storax vel a ludo et a gesticulatione Circus: et item similia In quibus summum Poetae vitium est, si quid et contrario repugnans contrarium diversumque protulerit, nisi per ἀντιφράσιν nomen imposuerit joculariter, ut Misargyrides in Plauto dicitur trapezita." Whoever wishes to be convinced of this by more examples let him study the names in Plautus and Terence. Since their plays are all derived from the Greek, so the names come from the same source, and in their etymology have always a reference to the social condition, the mode of thought, and so forth that these personages had in common with others, even if we cannot now clearly and certainly trace this etymology.

I will not linger over this well-known matter, but I am astonished that Aristotle's commentators did not remember it when Aristotle so unquestionably refers to it. What can be more true, more clear, than what the philosopher says of the consideration poetry must evince towards the general in choice of names? What can be more unquestionable than this, ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς κωμῳδίας ἤδη τοῦτο δῆλον γέγονεν, and that this consideration has been long openly evinced, especially in comedy? From its first origin, that is as soon as the iambic poet rose from the particular to the general, as

[1] This sentence might easily be misunderstood. For instance, if we were to understand it as if Donatus held this as something absurd, "comicum aperte argumentum confingere" This is not at all Donatus's meaning. He wished to say it would be absurd if the comic poet who manifestly invents his theme should give to his personages awkward names or occupations at variance with their names For since the whole subject is wholly the invention of the poet, it was entirely his own free choice what names he gave to his personages, and what standing or occupation he meant to connect with these names. Perhaps Donatus should not have expressed himself so dubiously, and by the change of a single syllable this difficulty is avoided Read either "absurdum est, comicum aperte argumentum confingentem vel nomen personæ," etc, or else "aperte argumentum confingere et nomen personæ," etc

soon as instructive comedy arose out of wounding satire, sprang the endeavour to indicate this general by means of the names. The braggart cowardly soldier was not named like this or that leader of this or that race, he was called Pyrgopolinices, Captain Wallbreaker. The miserable sycophant who flattered him, was not called like some poor devil in the city, but was named Artotrogus, Crumbcutter. The youth who plunges his father into debt by his extravagances, especially in the matter of horses, was not called like this or that noble citizen, he was named Phidippides, Master Sparehorse.

It might be objected that such suggestive names may be an invention of the newer Greek comedy to whose poets the use of real names was gravely forbidden, and that Aristotle did not know this newer comedy and consequently could take no cognizance of it in his rules. The latter is assumed by Hurd,[2] but it is as false, as it is false

[2] Hurd in his dissertation on the various provinces of the drama, says. "From the account of Comedy, here given, it may appear that the idea of this drama is much enlarged beyond what it was in Aristotle's time, who defines it to be an imitation of light and trivial actions, provoking ridicule. His notion was taken from the state and practice of the Athenian stage, that is from the old or middle comedy which answers to this description. The great revolution, which the introduction of the new comedy made in the drama, did not happen till afterwards." But Hurd merely assumes this, in order that his explanation of comedy may not be exactly opposed to that of Aristotle. Aristotle certainly lived to see the newer comedy, and he especially considers it in his 'Nicomachean ethics,' where he treats of becoming and unbecoming jokes (lib. iv. cap. 14) *ἴδοὺ δ' ἄν τις καὶ ἐκ τῶν κωμῳδιῶν τῶν παλαιῶν καὶ τῶν κοινῶν. Τοῖς μεν γὰρ ἦν γελοῖον ἡ αἰσχρολογία, τοῖς δε μᾶλλον ἡ ὑπόνοια.* It might perhaps be said that under new comedy, middle comedy was here meant, for when there was no new, the middle was necessarily thus called. It might be added that Aristotle died in the very Olympiad in which Menander's first play was performed and the very year before (Eusebius, in Chronico ad Olymp. cxiv. 4). But it is not correct to reckon the commencement of the new comedy from Menander. Menander was the first poet of this epoch according to poetical value, but not according to time. Philemon, who belongs to it, wrote much earlier, and the transition from middle to the new comedy was so imperceptible that Aristotle cannot possibly have lacked examples thereof. Even Aristophanes had given a sample of this genus, his 'Kokalos' was so constructed that Philemon could make it his own with few alterations. We read in the Life of Aristophanes. *Κόκαλον, ἐν ᾧ εἰσάγει φθορὰν καὶ*

that the older Greek comedy only employed real names. Even in those plays whose foremost and sole object it was to make a certain well-known person hated and ridiculous nearly all the other names except that of this person were inventions, and invented with reference to their standing and character.

No 91.

Indeed the real names themselves we may say not unfrequently aimed more at the general than the particular Under the name of Sokrates, Aristophanes did not seek to make Sokrates ridiculous and suspicious, but all sophists who meddled with the education of young people. The dangerous sophists in general were his theme, and he only called this one Sokrates because Sokrates was decried as such an one Hence a number of traits that did not fit Sokrates, so that Sokrates himself could calmly stand up in the theatre and offer himself for comparison. But how much is the nature of the comedy misapprehended, if these inexact traits be regarded as nothing but arbitrary calumnies, and not regarded as that which they are, enlargement of the individual characters, an elevation from the personal to the general.

Here much might be said concerning the use generally of real names in Greek comedy, which has not been so exactly explained by scholars as it well merits. It might be noticed that this custom was by no means universal in older Greek comedy[1] and that only this or

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ἀναγνωρισμὸν καὶ τἄλλα πάντα ἃ ἐζηλώσε Μένανδρος. Now as Aristophanes furnishes samples of all varieties of comedy, so Aristotle could adapt his explanation of comedy from them all. He did this, and comedy afterwards received no enlargement for which this explanation became too narrow If Hurd had rightly understood it, he would not have needed to have recourse to an assumed ignorance of Aristotle in order to place his own ideas of comedy, right enough in themselves, beyond the pale of all disagreement with those of Aristotle

[1] If, according to Aristotle, the scheme of comedy is borrowed from the Margites of Homer, οὐ ψόγον, ἀλλὰ τὸ γελοῖον δραματοποιήσαντος, then, according to all appearance, fictitious names were introduced from the beginning For Margites was probably not the real name of a certain person, since Μαργείτης was more probably made from μάργης,

that poet occasionally ventures upon it,[2] and that consequently it cannot be regarded as a distinctive feature of this epoch in comedy.[3] It might be shown that when at

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than that μάργης should have arisen from Μαργείτης. We find it especially mentioned by various poets of older comedy that they refrained from all allusions, which would not have been possible with real names, for instance, Pherekrates.

2 Personal satire was so little an essential feature of the older comedy, that we rather know that poet very well who first ventured upon it. It was Cratinus who first τῷ χαρίεντι τῆς κωμῳδίας τὸ ὠφέλιμον προσέθηκε, τοὺς κακῶς πράττοντας διαβάλλων, καὶ ὥσπερ δημοσίᾳ μάστιγι τῇ κωμῳδίᾳ κολάζων. Even he only ventured at first upon vulgar disreputable people, from whose resentment he had nothing to fear. Aristophanes would not be deprived of the honour of being the first to venture upon the great ones of the state (Ir. v. 750).

οὐκ ἰδιώτας ἀνθρωπίσκους κωμῳδῶν, οὐδὲ γυναῖκας,
ἀλλ' Ἡρακλέους ὀργήν τιν' ἔχων, τοῖσι μεγίστοις ἐπιχείρει.

Nay, he would even have wished to have regarded this boldness as his peculiar privilege. He was very jealous when he saw that so many other poets, whom he despised, followed him herein.

3 Which nevertheless nearly always happens. People even go further and try to maintain that with the real names real events were connected in which the invention of the poet had taken no part. Even Dacier says: "Aristote n'a pu vouloir dire qu'Épicharmus et Phormis inventèrent les sujets de leurs pièces, puisque l'un et l'autre ont été des poetes de la vieille comédie, où il n'y avait rien de feint, et que ces aventures feintes ne commencèrent à être mises sur le théâtre, que du temps d'Alexandre le Grand, c'est-à-dire dans la nouvelle comédie" (Remarque sur le chap. v. de la Poët. d'Arist.). One might really fancy that any one who could say this could never even have taken a peep into Aristophanes. The argument, the fable of old Greek comedy, was as much invented as the arguments and fables of the moderns can be. Not one of the remaining dramas of Aristophanes represents an event that really occurred, and how can we say that the poet has not invented it because it alludes in part to real events? When Aristotle assumes as established ὅτι τὸν ποιητὴν μᾶλλον τῶν μύθων εἶναι δεῖ ποιητὴν, ἢ τῶν μέτρων· would he not have been forced to exclude the authors of old Greek comedy from the class of poets if he had believed that they had not invented the arguments of their plays? But as, according to him, it may be compatible with the poetical invention of tragedy to borrow names and events from history, it must also have been the case with comedy. It cannot possibly have been in keeping with his notions that comedy, by using real names and alluding to real events, fell back into the iambic love of satire; rather he must have believed that καθόλου ποιεῖν λόγους ἢ μύθους was quite compatible with it. He asserts this of the older comic poets,

last it was strictly forbidden by law, still there always remained certain persons who were either expressly excluded from the protection of the law or else were silently regarded as so excluded. In the plays of Menander people enough were called by their real names and made ridiculous.[4] But I will not wander from one digression into another.

I will only make the application to the real names in tragedy. Just as the Aristophanic Sokrates neither represents nor is intended to represent the individual man of that name; just as this personified ideal of a vain and dangerous school-wisdom only gained the name of Sokrates because Sokrates was in part known as such a deceiver and tempter, in part was to become better known as such a one; just as the poet was decided in his choice of the name by the circumstance that the name of Sokrates combined and should combine yet more the mere conception of character and position; so also the conception of character we are accustomed to combine with the names Regulus, Cato, Brutus decided the tragic poet in giving these names to his personages. He introduces a Regulus, a Brutus, not to make us acquainted with the real adventures of these men, not to revive their memories, but to entertain us with such adventures as might and must occur to men of their character. Now it is true that we have abstracted this character from the real events of their lives, but it does not therefore follow that their character must lead us back to these events. Not rarely it will lead us far more briefly and naturally to quite others with which those

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Epicharmus, Phormis and Krates, and would certainly not have denied it to Aristophanes, even though he knew how much he had taken off not only Kleon and Hyperbolus, but also Perikles and Sokrates.

[4] The severity with which Plato in his 'Republic' interdicted that any one should be made ridiculous in comedy was never exercised in the real Republic (μήτε λόγῳ, μήτε εἰκόνι, μήτε θυμῷ, μήτε ἄνευ θυμοῦ, μηδαμὸς μηδένα τῶν πολίτων κωμῳδεῖν) I will not prove by citation that in Menander's plays many a cynic philosopher, many a courtesan is mentioned by name; it might be replied that this scum of humanity did not belong to the citizens. But Ktesippus, the son of Chabrias, was certainly an Athenian citizen, as good as any, and see what Menander says of him (Menandri, Fr. p. 137, edit. Cl.)

real ones have nothing in common save that they have flowed from one source, but by paths that cannot be followed, and over tracts of land that have fouled their purity. In this case the poet will certainly prefer the fictitious to the real, and yet leave to his personages their real names. And this for a double reason; in the first place because we are accustomed to think of a character as it is shown in its generality in connexion with this name; secondly, because real names seem to be attached to real occurrences, and all that has once occurred is more credible than what has not occurred. The first of these reasons springs from the connexion in general of the Aristotelian conceptions; it is fundamental, and it was not needful for Aristotle to dwell upon it more circumstantially. The second on the contrary required it, as springing from extraneous causes. But this lies beside my way just now, and the commentators in general have misunderstood it less than the former.

And now to return to Diderot's assertion. If I may think that I have rightly explained Aristotle's teaching, then I may also believe that my explanation has proved that the matter itself cannot possibly be otherwise than as Aristotle teaches. The characters in tragedy must be as general as the characters in comedy. The difference maintained by Diderot is imaginary, or else Diderot must comprehend under the generality of a character something quite different from what Aristotle meant thereby.

No. 92.

And why should not the latter be the case? Do I not find that another and no less excellent critic expresses himself in the same way as Diderot, and seems to contradict Aristotle almost as flatly, and yet fundamentally contradicts him as little, so that I must acknowledge him among all critics as the one who has spread most light concerning this matter.

This is the English commentator on Horace's Poetics, Hurd . . . Hurd has appended an essay on the various provinces of drama to his commentary. For he thought that he had observed that up to his time only the general laws

of this mode of poetry had been considered, without establishing the limits of the various species. Yet this must also take place in order to pronounce a fair judgment on the special merits of each species. After therefore defining the intention of drama in general and of the three species—tragedy, comedy, and farce, he deduces from their general and their special objects those qualities which they have in common as well as those which distinguish them.

Among the latter he counts in regard to comedy and tragedy these; that a true occurrence is more suitable to tragedy, a fictitious one to comedy. He thus proceeds. "The same genius in the two dramas is observable in their draught of characters. Comedy makes all characters general; tragedy, particular. The 'Avare' of Molière is not so properly the picture of a covetous man, as of covetousness itself Racine's 'Nero' on the other hand is not a picture of cruelty, but of a cruel man."

Hurd seems to conclude thus. If tragedy demands a real occurrence, then the characters must be true, that is, must be constructed as they really exist in the individuals If on the other hand comedy can be satisfied with fictitious occurrences, if probable occurrences in which characters can display themselves in all their range are more acceptable to it than real ones that do not permit of such wide scope; then its characters may and must of themselves be more general than they exist in nature, seeing that such generality assumes in our imagination a kind of entity, which has exactly the same relation to the real existence of the individual as the probable has to the actual.

I will not now examine whether this mode of conclusion is not a mere circle. I will merely accept the conclusion as it lies and as it directly contradicts the teaching of Aristotle. But as I have said, it only seems so to do, as is demonstrated from Hurd's extended explanation.

He says "Yet here it will be proper to guard against two mistakes, which the principles now delivered may be thought to countenance.

"The *first* is with regard to *tragic* characters, which I say are *particular*. My meaning is, that they are *more* particular than those of comedy. That is, the *end* of tragedy

does not require or permit the poet to draw together so many of those characteristic circumstances which show the manners, as comedy. For in the former of these dramas, no more of *character* is shown, than what the course of the action necessarily calls forth. Whereas, all or most of the features, by which it is usually distinguished are sought out and industriously displayed in the latter.

"The case is much the same as in *portrait-painting*, where if a great master be required to draw a *particular face*, he gives the very lineaments he finds in it; yet so far resembling to what he observes of the same turn in other faces, as not to affect any minute circumstances of peculiarity. But if the same artist were to design a *head* in general, he would assemble together all the customary traits and features, anywhere observable through the species, which should best express the idea, whatever it was, he had conceived in his own mind and wanted to exhibit in the picture.

"There is much the same difference between the two sorts of *dramatic* portraits. Whence it appears that in calling the tragic character *particular*, I suppose it only *less representative* of the kind than the comic, not that the draught of so much character as it is concerned to represent shall not be *general*, the contrary of which I have asserted and explained at large elsewhere.[1]

"Next I have said, the characters of just comedy are *general* And this I explain by the instance of the 'Avare' of Molière which conforms more to the idea of *avarice*, than to that of the real *avaricious man*. But here again, the reader will not understand me, as saying this in the strict sense of the words. I even think Molière faulty in the instance given; though, with some necessary explanation, it may well enough serve to express my meaning.

[1] At the words in Horace's 'Poetics' · "Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo Doctum imitatorem, et veras hinc ducere voces," where Hurd shows that the truth here demanded by Horace means such an expression as conforms to the general nature of things, while falsehood means that which, however suitable to the particular instance in view, does yet not correspond to such general nature

"The view of the comic scene being to delineate characters, this end, I suppose, will be attained most perfectly, by making these characters as *universal* as possible. For thus the person shown in the drama being the representative of all characters of the same kind, furnishes in the highest degree the entertainment of *humour*. But then this universality must be such as agrees not to our idea of the *possible* effects of the character as conceived in the abstract, but to the *actual* exertion of its powers, which experience justifies and common life allows. Molière, and before him Plautus, had offended in this; that for a picture of the *avaricious man*, they presented us with a fantastic, unpleasing draught of the *passion of avarice*. I call this a *phantastic* draught because it hath no archetype in nature. And it is, farther, an *unpleasing* one for, being the delineation of a *simple passion unmixed* it wanted all those

"'Lights and shades, whose well accorded strife
Gives all the strength and colour of our life.'

All these *lights* and *shades* (as the poet finely calls the intermixture of many passions, which, with the *leading* or principal ones form the human character) must be blended together in every picture of dramatic manners, because the avowed business of the drama is to image real life. Yet the draught of the *leading* passion must be as general as this strife in nature permits, in order to express the intended character more perfectly."

No 93.

"All which again is easily illustrated in the instance of painting. In *portraits of character*, as we may call those that give a picture of the *manners*, the artist, if he be of real ability, will not go to work on the possibility of an abstract idea All he intends, is to show that some one quality *predominates*, and this he images strongly, and by such signatures as are most conspicuous in the operation of the *leading passion*. And when he hath done this, we may, in common speech or in compliment, if we please, to his art, say of such a portrait that it images to us not the *man* but the *passion*; just as the ancients observed of the

famous statue of Apollodorus by Silarion, that it expressed not the angry *Apollodorus*, but his passion of anger.[1] But by this must be understood only that he has well expressed the leading parts of the designed character. For the rest he treats his *subject* as he would any other; that is, he represents the *concomitant affections*, or considers merely that general symmetry and proportion which are expected in a human figure. And this is to copy nature, which affords no specimen of a man turned all into a single passion. No metamorphosis could be more strange or incredible. Yet portraits of this vicious taste are the admiration of common starers, who, if they find a picture of a *miser* for instance (as there is no commoner subject of moral portraits) in a collection, where every muscle is strained, and feature hardened into the expression of this idea, never fail to profess their wonder and approbation of it On this idea of excellence, Le Brun's book of the Passions must be said to contain a set of the unjustest *moral portraits*. And the characters of Theophrastus might be recommended, in a dramatic view, as preferable to those of Terence.

"The *virtuosi* in the fine arts would certainly laugh at the former of these judgments. But the latter, I suspect, will not be thought so extraordinary. At least if one may guess from the practice of some of our best comic writers and the success which such plays have commonly met with. It were easy to instance in almost all plays of character. But if the reader would see the extravagance of building dramatic manners on abstract ideas, in its full light, he needs only turn to Ben Jonson's 'Every Man out of his Humour';[2] which under the name of the *play of character*

[1] "Non hominem ex ære fecit, sed iracundiam"—Plin. xxxiv. 8

[2] Ben Jonson has named two comedies after "humour," the one 'Every Man in his Humour,' the other 'Every Man out of his Humour.' The word "humour" had come up in his time, and was misused in the most absurd manner. This abuse, as well as its real meaning, he expresses in the following lines.—

"As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their constructions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.

[But

is in fact, an unnatural, and, as the painters call it, *hard* delineation of a group of *simply existing passions*, wholly chimerical, and unlike to anything we observe in the commerce of real life. Yet this comedy has always had its admirers. And *Randolph* in particular, was so taken with the design, that he seems to have formed his *Muse's looking-glass* in express imitation of it.

"Shakespeare, we may observe, is in this as in all the other more essential beauties of the drama, a perfect model. If the discerning reader peruse attentively his comedies with this view, he will find his *best-marked* characters discoursing through a great deal of their *parts* just like any other, and only expressing their essential and leading qualities occasionally, and as circumstances concur to give an easy exposition to them. This singular excellence of his comedy was the effect of his copying faithfully after nature, and of the force and vivacity of his genius, which

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But that a rook by wearing a pied feather,
The sable hatband, or the three-piled ruff,
A yard of shoe-tye, or the Switzer's knot
On his French garters should affect a humour!
Oh! it is more than most ridiculous."

In the history of Humour, therefore, these two plays of Jonson are important documents, and the second even more than the first The humour we now especially ascribe to the English was then chiefly affectation, and it was notably to make this affectation ludicrous that Jonson depicted humour To take the matter accurately, only such affected humour, never the real thing, should form the theme of a comedy. For only the desire to be distinguished from others, to be remarkable through some peculiarity, is a general human weakness, which, according to the nature of the means chosen, can be very absurd or very culpable. But that whereby Nature herself, or a long-continued habit that has become second nature, marks out an individual man from all others, is far too special to accord with the general philosophical intentions of the drama The overladen humour in many English plays might consequently form their distinctive, but not their best feature It is certain that not a trace of humour is found in the drama of the ancients The old dramatic poets, indeed the old poets in general, possessed the artistic secret of individualising their characters without the aid of humour. The old historians and orators certainly evince humour now and then, when for instance historical truth or the exposition of certain facts demands an accurate description καθ' ἕκαστον . . .

made him attentive to what the progress of the scene successively presented to him; whilst *imitation* and *inferior talents* occasion little writers to wind themselves up into the habit of attending perpetually to their main view and a solicitude to keep their favourite characters in constant play and agitation. Though in this illiberal exercise of their wit, they may be said to use *the persons of their drama* as a certain facetious sort do their *acquaintance*, whom they urge and tease with their civilities, not to give them a reasonable share in the conversation, but to force them to play *tricks* for the diversion of the company."

No. 94.

So much for the generality of the comic character and the limits of this generality, according to Hurd's idea! But it will still be necessary to quote the second passage, where he tells us he has explained in how far the tragic characters, though they are only particular, yet partake of a generality, before we can draw any conclusion whether, and how far, Hurd agrees with Diderot and both agree with Aristotle.

"*Truth* in poetry, means such an expression, as conforms to the general nature of things; *falsehood*, that, which however suitable to the particular instance in view, doth yet not correspond to such *general nature*. To attain to this *truth* of expression in dramatic poetry, two things are prescribed: first, a diligent study of the Socratic philosophy, and secondly, a masterly knowledge and comprehension of human life. The first, because it is the peculiar distinction of that school: *ad veritatem vitæ propius accedere* (Cic. de Orat. lib. 1, c. 51) and the latter, as rendering the imitation more universally striking. This will be understood in reflecting *that truth may be followed too closely in works of imitation;* as is evident in two respects. For first, the artist, when he would give a copy of nature, may confine himself too scrupulously to the exhibition of *particulars*, and so fail of representing the general idea of the *kind*. Or, second, in applying himself to give the *general* idea, he may collect it from an enlarged view of *real* life, whereas it were still better taken from the nobler

the imputed character requires. But to perceive clearly and certainly, how far, and with what degree of strength this or that character will, on particular occasions, most probably show itself, this is the fruit only of a knowledge of the world Instances of a want of this knowledge cannot be supposed frequent in such a writer as Euripides; nor, when they occur, so glaring as to strike a common reader. They are niceties, which can only be discerned by the true critic; and even to *him*, at this distance of time, from an ignorance of the Greek manners, that may possibly appear a fault, which is a real beauty. It would therefore be dangerous to think of pointing out the places, which Aristotle might believe liable to this censure in Euripides. I will however presume to mention one, which, if not justly criticised, will, at least, serve to illustrate my meaning.

No. 95.

"The story of his 'Electra' is well known. The poet had to paint in the character of this princess, a virtuous, but fierce resentful woman; stung by a sense of personal ill-treatment, and instigated to the revenge of a father's death, by still stronger motives. A disposition of this warm temperament, it might be concluded by the philosopher in his closet, would be prompt to show itself. Electra would, on any proper occasion, be ready to vow her resentment, as well as to forward the execution of her purpose. But to what lengths would this *resentment* go? *i e* what degree of fierceness might Electra express, without affording occasion to a person widely skilled in mankind and the operation of the passions, to say, "This is improbable"? Here abstract theories will be of little service Even a moderate acquaintance with real life will be unable to direct us. Many individuals may have fallen under observation, that will justify the poet in carrying the expression of such a *resentment* to any extreme. History would perhaps furnish examples, in which a virtuous resentment hath been carried even further than is here represented by the poet What way then of determining the precise bounds and limits of it?

Only by observing in numerous instances, *i e.* from a large extensive knowledge of practical life, how far it usually, in such characters, and under such circumstances, prevails. Hence a difference of representation will arise in proportion to the extent of that *knowledge*. Let us now see how the character before us, hath in fact, been managed by Euripides.

In that fine scene, which passes between Electra and Orestes, whom as yet she suspects not to be her brother, the conversation very naturally turns upon Electra's distresses, and the author of them, Clytemnestra, as well as on her hopes of deliverance from them by the means of Orestes. The dialogue upon this proceeds.—

Or. What then of Orestes, were he to return to this Argos?

El. Ah! wherefore that question, when there is no prospect of his return at all?

Or But supposing he should return, how would he go about to revenge the death of his father?

El. In the same way, in which that father suffered from the daring attempts of his enemies.

Or. And would you then dare to undertake with him the murder of your mother?

El. Yes, with that very steel, with which she murdered my father.

Or. And am I at liberty to relate this to your brother, as your fixed resolution?

El I desire only to live, till I have murdered my mother.

The Greek is still stronger.

θάνοιμι, μητρὸς αἷμ' ἐπισφάξασ' ἐμῆς.

May I die, as soon as I have murdered my mother!

Now that this last sentence is absolutely unnatural, will not be pretended. There have been doubtless many examples, under the like circumstances, of an expression of revenge carried thus far. Yet, I think, we can hardly help being a little shocked at the fierceness of *this* expression At least Sophokles has not thought fit to carry it to that extreme. In him, Electra contents herself with saying to Orestes, on a similar occasion.—

"The conduct of this affair now rests upon you. Only let me observe this to you, that, had I been left alone, I would not have failed in one of these two purposes, either to deliver myself gloriously, or to perish gloriously."

"Whether this representation of Sophokles be not more agreeable to *truth* as collected from wide observation: *i.e.* from human nature at large, than that of Euripides, the capable reader will judge. If it be the reason I suppose to have been, that Sophokles painted his characters such as, attending to numerous instances of the same kind, he would conclude they ought to be; Euripides, such, as a narrower sphere of observation had persuaded him they were."

Most excellent! Even regardless of my intention in quoting these long passages from Hurd they unquestionably contain so many subtle observations, that my readers will probably relieve me from making any excuses on the score of this interpolation. I am only afraid lest over it he should have lost sight of my intention. It was this. to show that Hurd also, like Diderot, accorded particular characters to tragedy and general ones to comedy, and yet nevertheless did not wish to contradict Aristotle, who demands the generality of all poetic characters and consequently also of the tragic ones. Hurd thus explains himself. the tragic character must be particular, or rather less general than the comic, *i e.* it must be less representative of its kind, while at the same time the little that it is deemed well to show of it, must be conceived according to the generality demanded by Aristotle.[1]

Now comes the question whether Diderot also wishes to be thus understood? And why not, if he desires to be found nowhere in contradiction to Aristotle? It may be permitted to me who am concerned that two thinking heads should not say Yes and No about the same matter, to foist this exposition upon Diderot, to lend him this subterfuge.

But rather let me say another word about this subterfuge. It seems to me an evasion and yet no evasion. For

[1] In calling the tragic character *particular*, I suppose it only less *representative* of the kind than the comic, not that the draught of so much character as it is concerned to represent should not be *general*.

obviously the word *general* is taken in a double and quite different sense. The one in which Hurd and Diderot deny it to tragic characters, is not the same in which Hurd assents to it for them. Certainly the subterfuge just rests on this; but how if the one exactly excludes the other?

In the first sense a *general* character means a character in which what has been observed in one or more individuals, is welded together; in a word, an *overladen* character. It is more the personified idea of a character than a characterized person. In the other sense a *general* character means a character in which a certain average, a certain mean proportion has been taken from many or all individuals; in a word a *common* character, not in so far as concerns the character itself but in as far as the degree and measure of the same is common.

Hurd is quite right in explaining Aristotle's *καθόλου* as generality in the second sense. But if Aristotle demands this generality as well from the comic as the tragic characters, how is it possible that the same character can also possess the other generality? How is it possible that it should at the same time be *overladen* and *common?* And even granted it were not nearly as overladen as the characters in the censured play of Jonson's, granted it might still represent an individual, and that examples really existed that it showed itself as strongly and consistently in some human beings; would it not therefore be yet more *uncommon* than is permitted by the Aristotelian generality?

This is the difficulty! I here remind my readers that these sheets are to contain anything rather than a dramatic system. I am therefore not bound to resolve all the difficulties I raise. My thoughts may seem less and less connected, may even seem to contradict themselves, what matter if only they are thoughts amid which may be found matter for individual thinking! I only want here to scatter *Fermenta cognitionis.*

No. 96.

On the fifty-second evening Herr Romanus's 'Brothers' was repeated.

Or rather I should say the 'Brothers' of Herr Romanus Donatus remarks on the occasion of the 'Brothers' by Terence. "Hanc dicunt fabulam secundo loco actam, etiam tum rudi nomine poetæ; itaque sic pronunciatam, Adelphoi Terenti, non Terenti Adelphoi, quod adhuc magis de fabulæ nomine poeta, quam de poetæ nomine fabula commendabatur." Herr Romanus has issued his comedies without his name, but his name has got known by their means Those plays of his that have kept their place on our boards are a recommendation to his name, which is named in provinces in Germany where without them it would never have been heard. What ill-fate kept this man from continuing his labours for the stage until the plays had ceased to commend his name and his name commended the plays instead!

The most of what we Germans possess in the domain of *belles-lettres* are attempts by young people. Indeed, the prejudice is almost universal among us that it only befits young people to labour in this field. Men, it is said, have more serious studies, more important business to which Church or State invites them. Verses and comedies are named playthings, it is possible that they are not useless exercises with which we may occupy ourselves up to at most our twenty-fifth year. As soon as we approach manhood we ought carefully to dedicate all our strength to a useful profession. If this profession leaves us a little time wherein to write something, still we ought to write nothing but what can coexist with its gravity and its civic dignity; a neat compendium of the higher faculties, a good chronicle of our dear native town, an edifying sermon and such like.

Thence it arises that our *belles-lettres* have such a youthful, ay a childish appearance compared with, I will not say, the literature of the ancients, but even compared with that of all modern educated nations, and that they will long, long retain it It is not actually wanting in blood and life, in colour and fire, but power and nerves,

marrow and bones are greatly lacking. It has as yet so few works which a man, practised in thinking, cares to take up, when he wishes for once to think for his recreation and invigoration, outside the uniform tedious circle of his daily occupations. What nourishment can such a man find, for instance, in our most puerile comedies? Puns, proverbs, jokes that can be heard daily in the streets, such stuff may cause laughter in the pit that enjoys itself as best it can, but whoever desires to be amused beyond mere titillation, whoever wishes to laugh with his reason, he goes to the theatre once and never goes again.

Who has nothing, can give nothing. A young man just entering upon the world himself, cannot possibly know and depict the world. The greatest comic genius shows itself empty and hollow in its youthful works; Plutarch[1] even says of the first plays of Menander that they are not to be compared with his later and better plays. And he adds that we may thence conclude what he would still have produced had he lived longer. And how young is it supposed that Menander died? How many comedies is it supposed that he had already written? Not less than a hundred and five and not younger than fifty-two.

None of all our deceased comic poets, who are worth naming lived to that age; none of those now living are as yet so old; none of either have written a fourth part as many plays. And should not criticism have the same to say concerning them which it has just said of Menander? Let her only venture and speak out.

But it is not only the authors who listen with displeasure. We have now, Heaven be praised, a generation of critics whose highest criticism consists in making all criticism suspicious. They vociferate. "Genius! Genius! Genius overcomes all rules! What genius produces are rules!" Thus they flatter genius, I fancy in order that they too may be held geniuses. But they too evidently betray that they do not feel a spark of it in themselves,

[1] Ἐπιτ. τῆς συγκρίσεως Ἀριστ. καὶ Μενάν. p. 1588. Ed. Henr. Stephani.

when they add in one and the same breath: "Rules oppress genius." As if genius could be oppressed by anything in the world! And yet more by something that, as they themselves admit, is deduced from it. Not every critic is a genius; but every genius is a born critic. He has the proof of all rules within himself. He comprehends, remembers and follows only those that express his feelings in words. And these his feelings expressed in words should be able to limit his activity? Reason with him about this as much as you will, he only understands you in so far as he recognises your general axioms in a momentarily objective case, and he only remembers this particular case, and during work this affects his powers neither more nor less than the remembrance of a felicitous example or of an individual experience would do. To maintain therefore that rules and criticism can oppress genius, means to maintain in other words, that example and practice can do this; means not only limiting genius to itself but even to its first attempts.

These wise gentlemen know as little what they want when they lament so amusingly over the unfavourable impression which criticism makes on the public. They would like to persuade us that no one any longer thinks a butterfly bright and beautiful since the large magnifying glass has shown us that these colours are but dust.

"Our theatre," they say, "is yet of too tender an age to bear the monarchical sceptre of criticism. It is almost more needful to show the means how the ideal can be attained than to demonstrate how far we are still removed from that ideal. The stage must reform by examples, not by rules. It is easier to reason than to invent"

Now does that mean clothing ideas in words, or does it not rather mean seeking thoughts to put to words and finding none? And who are they after all, who talk so much of examples and invention? What examples have they furnished? What have they invented? The cunning fellows! When examples come before them for judgment they wish for rules, and if they are to judge rules, then they would rather have examples. Instead of proving that a criticism is false, they demonstrate that it

is too severe and then think they have neutralized it. Instead of confuting a line of argument, they note that invention is harder than reasoning and think they have confuted it!

Whoever reasons rightly, invents, and whoever desires to invent must be able to reason. Only those who are not fitted for either believe that they can separate the one from the other.

But why do I detain myself over these chatterers? I will go my way and remain regardless of what the grass-hoppers chirp by the roadside. Even a step aside to crush them is too much honour. The end of their summer is not long to await.

Therefore, without further introduction, to the comments I promised to make on the occasion of the first representation of Herr Romanus's 'Brothers.' The principal of these will relate to the changes he deemed it needful to make in Terence's fable, in order to bring it nearer to our manners.

What indeed can be said in general as to the necessity of such changes? If we find so little objection to see Roman or Greek customs depicted in tragedy, why not also in comedy? Whence the rule, if it is a rule, to place the scene of the one in a distant land, among a strange people, and to place the other in our homes? Whence the necessity, which we impose on the poet, of depicting in the former as accurately as may be the manners of the people among whom his action takes place, when we only demand in the latter that our own manners be depicted by him? Pope says of this, that on first sight, this appears mere obstinacy, mere whim, but that it has its reason in nature. What we chiefly seek in comedy is a faithful picture of common life, of whose fidelity, however, we cannot be so easily assured if we see it disguised in strange fashions and customs In tragedy on the other hand, it is the action that chiefly attracts our attention, and in order to use a native event for the stage we should have to take greater liberties with the action, than a well-known history permits.

No. 97.

This solution, strictly speaking, might not prove satisfactory in all plays For admitting that foreign manners do not meet the requirements of comedy as well as native ones, the question remains whether native manners do not bear a better relation to the intention of tragedy than foreign ones? This question is not answered by the difficulty of making a native event serviceable for the stage without too marked and offensive changes. True, native manners demand native events, but if with these tragedy attained its aim more easily and certainly, then it ought to be better to surmount all the difficulties that stand in the way of this treatment than to fall short of the essential intention which is unquestionably its aim. Neither will all native events demand such marked and offensive changes, and we are not obliged to treat of those that require them. Aristotle has already remarked that there can and may be events that have occurred exactly in the manner the poet requires. Since such however are rare, he has decided that the poet should trouble himself less about the minority among his spectators who are perhaps instructed concerning the exact circumstances, than about discharging his duty.

The advantage possessed by native customs in comedy rests on the intimate acquaintance we have with them. The poet does not first need to acquaint us with them; he is therefore relieved from all requisite descriptions and hints, he can at once let his personages act in accordance with their customs without first having tediously to describe these customs. Native customs therefore facilitate his labour and enhance the illusion of the spectator.

Now wherefore should the tragic poet resign this important double advantage? He too has reason to facilitate his labour as much as may be, and not to squander his strength on side issues but to husband it for the main object. For him too all depends on the illusion of the spectator. It may be replied that tragedy does not greatly need customs, that it can completely dispense with them. But in that case it does not need foreign

customs, and of the little it desires to have and to show of customs, it will still be better if these are taken from native customs rather than from foreign ones.

The Greeks at least never based either their comedies or their tragedies on any customs but their own. They rather preferred to lend foreign peoples their Greek customs when they drew the material of their tragedies from abroad, than to endanger stage effect by incomprehensible barbaric customs. They laid little or no weight on costume—which is so anxiously regarded by our tragic poets. The proof of this can manifestly be shown in the 'Persian Women' of Æschylus, and the reason why they held themselves so little bound by costume is easily to be deduced from the intention of tragedy.

But I am plunging too far into that portion of the problem which just now concerns me the least. Now when I insist that native customs would be more conformable with tragedy than foreign ones, I assume that they unquestionably are so in comedy. And if they are so, or if I at least believe that they are so, then I cannot do otherwise than approve the changes which Herr Romanus made with this intention in the play of Terence.

He was right to transform a fable in which such specifically Greek and Roman customs are so intimately interwoven The example only retains its power by means of its inherent probability, which every one judges by what is most familiar to him. All application falls away if we have first to place ourselves in strange surroundings with an effort. But such a transformation is no easy matter. The more perfect the fable, the less can the smallest part of it be changed without destroying the whole. And woe if we then content ourselves with patches instead of transforming in the real sense of the word!

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Nos 101, 102, 103, and 104.

Numbers a hundred and first to fourth? I had intended that the yearly issue of these papers should consist of a hundred numbers. Fifty-two weeks—two numbers a week makes certainly a hundred and four. But why, among all workmen, should the weekly journalist be the only

one to have no holidays? And only four in a whole year, that is not too much!

But Dodsley and Company[1] have expressly promised a hundred and four numbers to the public in my name. I must therefore not make these good people liars.

The only question is how am I best to set about it? My material is already cut out, I shall have to patch or to enlarge. But that sounds so bungling. There occurs to me,—what should have occurred to me at once,—that habit of the actors to let a little play succeed their chief representation The play may deal with what it likes and need not stand in the least connexion with the preceding. Such an after-play then may fill these pages which I had intended to have spared to myself

First a word concerning myself. For why should not an after-play have a prologue, beginning with a "Poeta cum primum animum ad scribendum appulit"? When a year and a day ago some good folk in this place conceived the idea of trying whether something more could not be done for the German theatre, than could be done under the management of a so-called director, I do not know how it was that they thought of me and dreamed that I could be useful to such an undertaking. I was just standing idly in the market-place, no one wanted to hire me, beyond doubt because no one knew how to use me until these friends came. Until now all occupations of my life have been very indifferent to me, I have never pushed myself into any or offered myself, but neither have I ever refused even the most insignificant to which I felt myself drawn by any kind of predilection

Whether I would concur in the foundation of the local theatre? to this I could reply easily. My only reasons for hesitation were these, whether I could, and how I could best do so?

I am neither actor nor poet.

It is true that I have sometimes had the honour of being taken for the latter, but only because I have been misunderstood. It is not right to draw such liberal

[1] [The assumed name of the piratical reprinters of Lessing's journal. —TR.]

inferences from the few dramatic attempts I have ventured. Not every one who takes up a brush and lays on colours is a painter. The earliest of my attempts were made at that time of life when we are but too apt to regard inclination and facility as genius. What is tolerable in my later attempts is due, as I am well aware, simply and solely to criticism. I do not feel within myself the living spring that works itself out of its native strength and breaks forth out of its own strength into such rich, fresh, clear streams. I must force everything out of myself by pressure and pipes. I should be poor, cold, shortsighted if I had not learnt in a measure to borrow foreign treasures, to warm myself at foreign fires and to strengthen my eyes by the glasses of art. I am therefore always ashamed or annoyed when I hear or read anything in disparagement of criticism. It is said to suppress genius, and I flattered myself that I had gained from it something very nearly approaching to genius. I am a lame man who cannot possibly be edified by abuse of his crutch.

But certainly like the crutch which helps the lame man to move from one place to another and yet cannot make him a runner, so it is with criticism. If by its aid I can produce something which is better than another who has my talents would make without it, yet it costs me much time, I must be free from all other occupations, must not be interrupted by arbitrary distractions, I must have all my learning at hand, I must be able calmly to recollect at every point all the observations I have ever made regarding customs and passions. Hence for a workman who is to furnish a theatre with novelties, no one could be worse suited than I.

Consequently I shall take care to refrain from doing for the German theatre what Goldoni did for the Italian, to enrich it in one year with thirteen new plays. Yes, I should leave that alone even if I could do it. I am more suspicious of first thoughts than even John de la Casa or old Shandy[2] could be. For even if I do not hold them to

[2] "An opinion John de la Casa, Archbishop of Benevento, was afflicted with, which opinion was, that whenever a Christian was writing a book (not for his private amusement, but) where his intent and purpose was *bonâ fide* to print and publish it to the world, his first thoughts were always the temptations of the evil one. My father

be temptations of the evil one, either of the real or the allegorical devil, I still think that first thoughts are the first and that the best does not even in all soups swim on the top. My first thoughts are certainly not better by a hair's-breadth than anybody's first thoughts and anybody's first thoughts had best be kept in the background.

At last they hit upon the plan to use that in me which makes me such a slow, or as my more energetic friends deem, such a lazy workman, criticism. And thus arose the idea of these papers.

It pleased me, this idea. It reminded me of the Didaskalia of the Greeks, *i.e.* of the short notices of the kind which even Aristotle thought it worth while to write on the plays of the Greek stage. It reminded me how, a long time ago, I had laughed over the highly learned Casaubon who, from sheer reverence for the solid in scholarship, conceived that Aristotle's chief aim in these Didaskalia had been the rectification of chronology.[3] For in very truth it would have been an everlasting disgrace to Aristotle if he had concerned himself more with the poetical value of plays, with the influence of customs, with the education of taste, than with the Olympiads, than with the years of the Olympiads and with the names of the archons under which they were first performed.

I had had the intention of calling my journal the 'Hamburg Didaskalia.' But the title sounded too foreign and now I am very glad I preferred the present one. What I chose to bring or not to bring into a Dramaturgy, rested with me; at least Lione Allacci could not prescribe to me.

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was hugely pleased with this theory of John de la Casa, and (had it not cramped him a little in his creed) I believe would have given ten of the best acres in the Shandy estate to have been the broacher of it; but as he could not have the honour of it in the literal sense of the doctrine, he took up with the allegory of it. 'Prejudice of education,' he would say, 'is the devil,' &c." ('Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,' vol. v. p. 74.)

[3] Animadv. in Athenæum, lib. vi. cap. 7. Διδασκαλία accipitur pro eo scripto, quo explicatur ubi, quando, quomodo et quo eventu fabula aliqua fuerit acta.—Quantum critici hac diligentia veteres chronologos adjuverint, soli æstimabunt illi, qui norunt quam infirma et tenuia præsidia habuerint, qui ad ineundam fugacis temporis rationem primi animum appulerunt. Ego non dubito, eo potissimum spectasse Aristotelem, cum διδασκαλίας suas componeret.

But the learned think they know what a Didaskalia should be like, if only from the extant Didaskalia of Terence which this same Casaubon calls *breviter et eleganter scriptas.* I had no inclination to write my Didaskalia either so briefly or so elegantly, and our contemporaneous Casaubons would have excellently shaken their heads when they found how rarely I touched upon any chronological circumstance that could at some future period throw light on an historical fact when millions of other books should be lost. They would have searched and to their astonishment not found, in my pages, what year of Louis XIV. or XV. first saw such or such a French masterpiece performed, whether at Paris or Versailles, in presence of princes of the blood or not in the presence of princes of the blood.

What else these papers were to have been, concerning this I explained myself in my preface; what they have really become, this my readers know. Not wholly that which I promised to make them, something different and yet I think nothing worse.

They were to accompany every step which the art of the poet as well as the actor should take here.

Of the second half I was very soon weary. We have actors but no mimetic art If in past times there was such an art, we have it no longer; it is lost, it must be discovered anew. There is enough superficial chatter on the subject in various languages, but special rules, known to every one, pronounced with distinctness and precision, according to which the blame or the praise of an actor can be defined in a particular case, of such I scarcely know two or three. Thence it arises that all our reasoning about this subject always seems so vacillating and dubious, and that it is small wonder if the actor who possesses nothing but a happy routine, feels himself offended by it in all ways. He will never think himself praised enough and will always believe himself blamed too much; ay, he will often not even know whether he has been praised or blamed. Indeed the observation was made long ago that the sensitiveness of artists, with regard to criticism, rises just in that ratio in which the certainty, precision, and number of their principles

regarding their art decline. This much in my own defence and in defence of those without whom I should not need to excuse myself.

But how about the first half of my promise? With this the *here* has certainly up to now been very little taken into consideration; and how could it be? The barriers are scarcely opened yet, and it was desired to see the competitors already at the goal; at a goal that every moment was placed further and further away from them. If the public asks, "What has been done?" and answers itself with a sarcastic, "Nothing," then I ask on my part, "What has the public done in order that something might be achieved?" Nothing also, ay, and something worse than nothing. Not enough that it did not help on the work, it did not even permit to it its natural life-course. Out on the good-natured idea to procure for the Germans a national theatre, when we Germans are not yet a nation! I do not speak of our political constitution, but only of our social character. It might almost be said that this consists in not desiring to have an individual one. We are still the sworn copyists of all that is foreign, especially are we still the obedient admirers of the never sufficiently admired French. All that comes to us from beyond the Rhine is beautiful, charming, exquisite, divine. We would rather belie our sight and hearing than find it otherwise. We would rather let ourselves be persuaded that clumsiness is unconstraint; impudence, grace; grimace, expression; a jingle of rhymes, poetry; howling, music; than in the least doubting the superiority in all that is good, beautiful, elevated and correct which this amiable people, this first people in the world, as they are in the habit of modestly calling themselves, have received from just fate as their portion.

But this *locus communis* is so stale, and its nearer application might easily grow so bitter, that I will rather break off from it.

Instead of following the steps which the art of the dramatic poet might have taken here, I was consequently obliged to linger over those that it would have previously had to take, in order afterwards to run its course with larger and more rapid strides. They were the steps that

one who has lost his way must retrace in order to get back to the right path and keep his goal straight before him.

Every one may boast of his industry. I believe I have studied the art of dramatic writing, and studied it more than twenty who practise it. I have also practised it so far as it is needful in order to be able to speak my say; for I know well that as the painter does not like to be blamed by one who does not know how to hold a brush, so it is with the poet. I have at least attempted what he must achieve, and can judge whether that can be done though I cannot effect it myself.

But it is possible to study until one has studied oneself deep into error. What therefore assures me that this has not happened to me, that I do not mistake the essence of dramatic art is this, that I acknowledge it exactly as Aristotle abstracted it from the countless masterpieces of the Greek stage. I have my own thoughts about the origin and foundation of this philosopher's poetics which I could not bring forward here without prolixity. I do not however hesitate to acknowledge (even if I should therefore be laughed to scorn in these enlightened times) that I consider the work as infallible as the Elements of Euclid. Its foundations are as clear and definite, only certainly not as comprehensible and therefore more exposed to misconstruction. Especially in respect to tragedy, as that concerning which time would pretty well permit everything to us, I would venture to prove incontrovertibly, that it cannot depart a step from the plumbline of Aristotle, without departing so far from its own perfection.

In this conviction I set myself the task of judging in detail some of the most celebrated models of the French stage. For this stage is said to be formed quite in accordance with the rules of Aristotle, and it has been particularly attempted to persuade us Germans that only by these rules have the French attained to the degree of perfection from which they can look down on all the stages of modern peoples. We have long so firmly believed this, that with our poets, to imitate the French was regarded as much as to work according to the rules of the ancients.

Nevertheless this prejudice could not eternally stand against our feelings. These were fortunately roused from their slumbers by some English plays, and we at last experienced that tragedy was capable of another quite different effect from that accorded by Corneille and Racine. But, dazzled by this sudden ray of truth, we rebounded to the edge of another prejudice. Certain rules with which the French had made us acquainted, were too obviously lacking to the English plays. What did we conclude thence? This, that without these rules the aim of tragedy could be attained, ay, that these rules were even at fault if this aim were less attained.

Now even this deduction might have passed. But with these rules we began to confound all rules, and to pronounce it generally as pedantry to prescribe to genius what it must do or leave alone. In short we were on the point of wantonly throwing away the experience of all past times and rather demanding from the poet that each one should discover the art anew.

I should be vain enough to deem I had done something meritorious for our theatre, if I might believe that I have discovered the only means of checking this fermentation of taste. I may at least flatter myself that I have worked hard against it, since I have had nothing more at heart than to combat the delusion concerning the regularity of the French stage. No nation has more misapprehended the rules of ancient drama than the French. They have adopted as the essential some incidental remarks made by Aristotle about the most fitting external division of drama, and have so enfeebled the essential by all manner of limitations and interpretations, that nothing else could necessarily arise therefrom but works that remained far below the highest effect on which the philosopher had reckoned in his rules.

. . . .

It is the absolute truth, that the systematic reprint by which it has been sought to make these papers more popular, is the only cause why their publication has been so deferred and why they must be wholly abandoned. Before I say a word more about this, I may be permitted to clear myself of any suspicion of selfishness. The theatre

itself has paid the expenses in the hopes of receiving back a considerable portion from the sale of the paper. I lose nothing by the failure of this hope. Neither am I annoyed that I cannot bring forward the materials I had collected for the continuation. I draw back my hand as willingly from this plough as I placed it there. . . .

I cannot and will not deny that these last sheets have been written almost a year later than their date suggests. The sweet dream of founding a national theatre here in Hamburg has already faded, and as far as I have now learnt to know this place, it might be the very last where such a dream could ever find realization.

But that too can be all the same to me. I should not like to appear as if I held the failure of efforts in which I have taken part a signal misfortune. They are of no particular value just because I have taken part in them. But how, if endeavours of greater import should fail owing to the same ill-services through which mine have failed? The world loses nothing because I only bring out two volumes of dramaturgy instead of five or six. But it might lose if a more useful work by a better author were thus hindered, and if there were actually people who laid express plans that the most useful work, begun under similar circumstances, should and must come to an untimely end.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.